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***Transbay Transit Center Unearths Woolly Mammoth
Tooth And Jaw from Depth of Excavation***

Rare find proves to be important; TJPA makes plans to donate find for display

San Francisco, Calif. (September 12, 2012) –In the midst of construction at the Transbay Transit Center in downtown San Francisco, the Transbay Joint Powers Authority made a rare discovery: a Woolly Mammoth tooth and part of a jaw. The tooth and jaw were found on September 10th at the east end of the Transbay Transit Center jobsite, where excavation work is taking place, at 110-feet below the surface of construction by crane operator Brandon Valasik.

“We are thrilled with the discovery of this rare find,” said Maria Ayerdi-Kaplan, Executive Director of the TJPA. “Preserving the artifacts from San Francisco’s early history that lie below the future site of the Transit Center has been a high priority throughout construction, and archaeologists have been with the project since we broke ground, but this fascinating reminder of the Bay Area’s rich natural history was truly unexpected,” she said.

Currently estimated by experts to be roughly ~11,000 years old, the tooth and jaw are believed to come from a Columbian Mammoth, *Mamut Columbi*, a relative of the modern day elephant that lived in the Bay Area during the Pleistocene Period. During that time, the San Francisco Bay Area was a grassy valley that closely resembled the Serengeti of East Africa and had a wide array of inhabitants including: saber tooth cats, giant ground sloths, mastodons, elk, tapirs, short-faced bear, and bison (still found today in Golden Gate Park).

According to the TJPA’s paleontology consultant, the tooth has nicely preserved enamel ridges on the side and top of the tooth and will further the study and understanding of the Pleistocene Epoch (~1.8 million to ~11,000 years ago). The find is the same age as artifacts found in downtown Los Angeles and may improve understanding of biological as well as evolutionary

processes of extinct organisms during this time. Data from finds like this are particularly important as paleontological age data is then passed on to geologists who study tectonics and seismic hazards, which is then passed on to engineers who design our buildings, such as the Transbay Transit Center, to withstand the tectonic forces, like earthquakes.

The TJPA intends to donate this find to the California Academy of Sciences and is currently in discussions with the Academy about exhibiting this piece.

The Transbay Transit Center is a visionary, \$4 billion transportation and housing project that will transform downtown San Francisco and the Bay Area's regional transportation system by creating a "Grand Central Station of the West" in the heart of a new, transit-friendly neighborhood surrounding the Transit Center. Phase 1 of the project (the Transit Center) is on schedule to be completed by 2017.