

● DTLA, Regional Connector

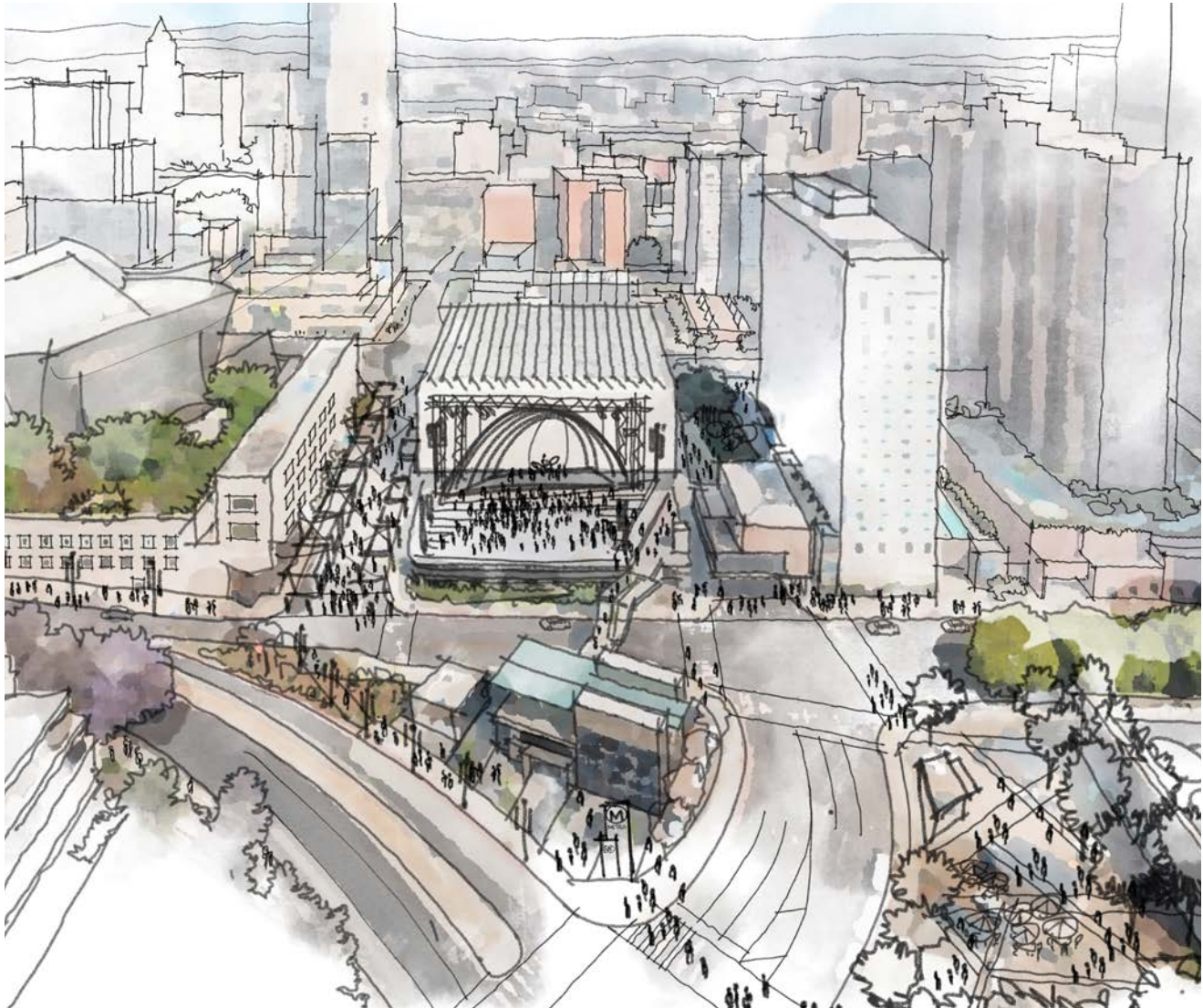


ILLUSTRATION BY JOHN ERIC CHUNG

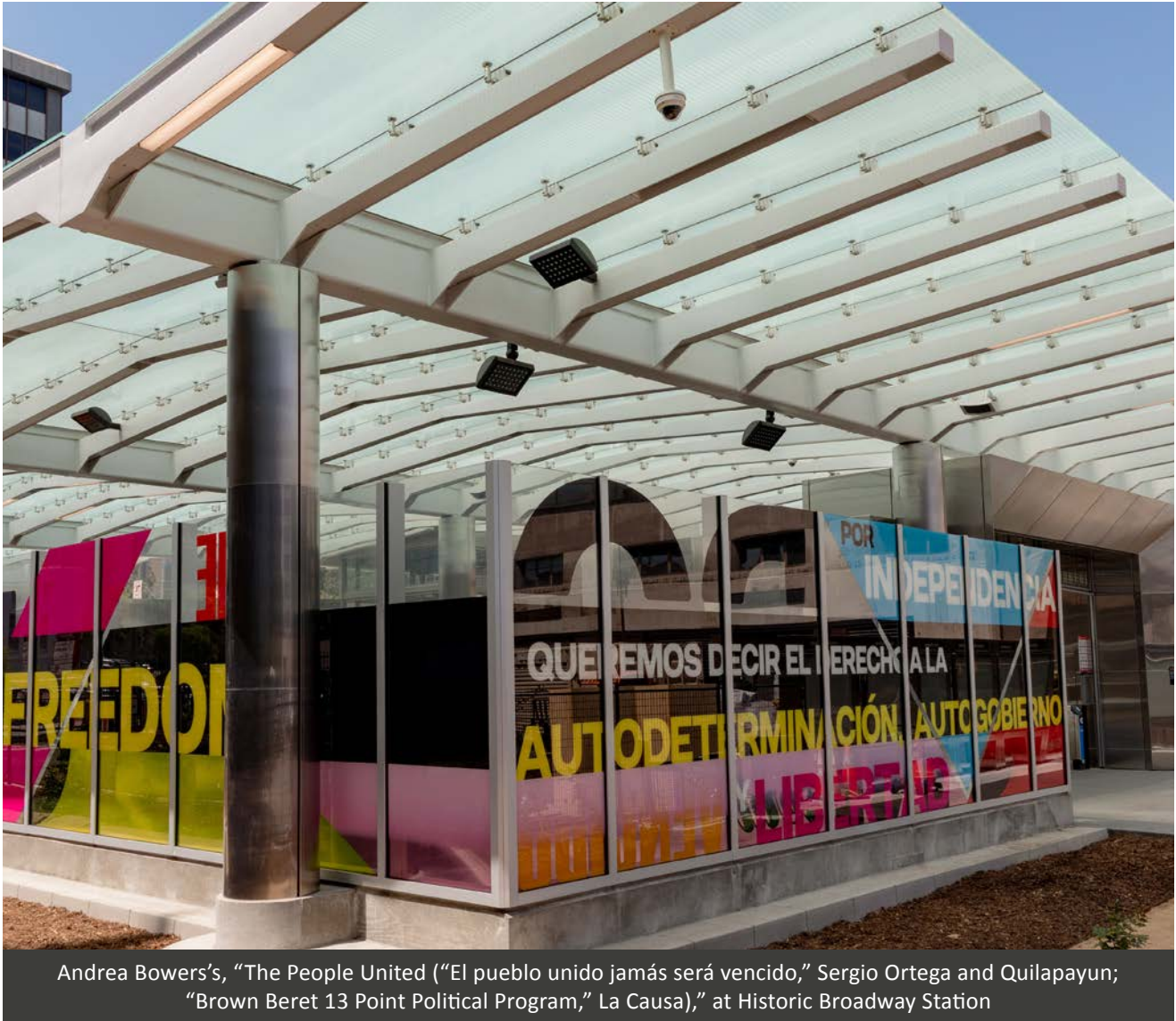
Downtown LA has been a central gathering point for Angelenos since the birth of the city. Every day, people from across the region come to Downtown for reasons both mundane and extraordinary, from jury duty to dinner and a show, and everything in between. It is also a major hub for business and employment in virtually all sectors of the economy.

DTLA is really the only place in Los Angeles that can accommodate the regular flow of hundreds of thousands of workers and tens of thousands of visitors and also play host to major events and mass gatherings ranging from corporate conventions to the city’s New Year’s Eve celebration. Whether for sports championships, political demonstrations, corporate headquarters or government offices, Downtown is where people convene and connect for commerce, culture, and community.



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Downtown's Evolving Identity



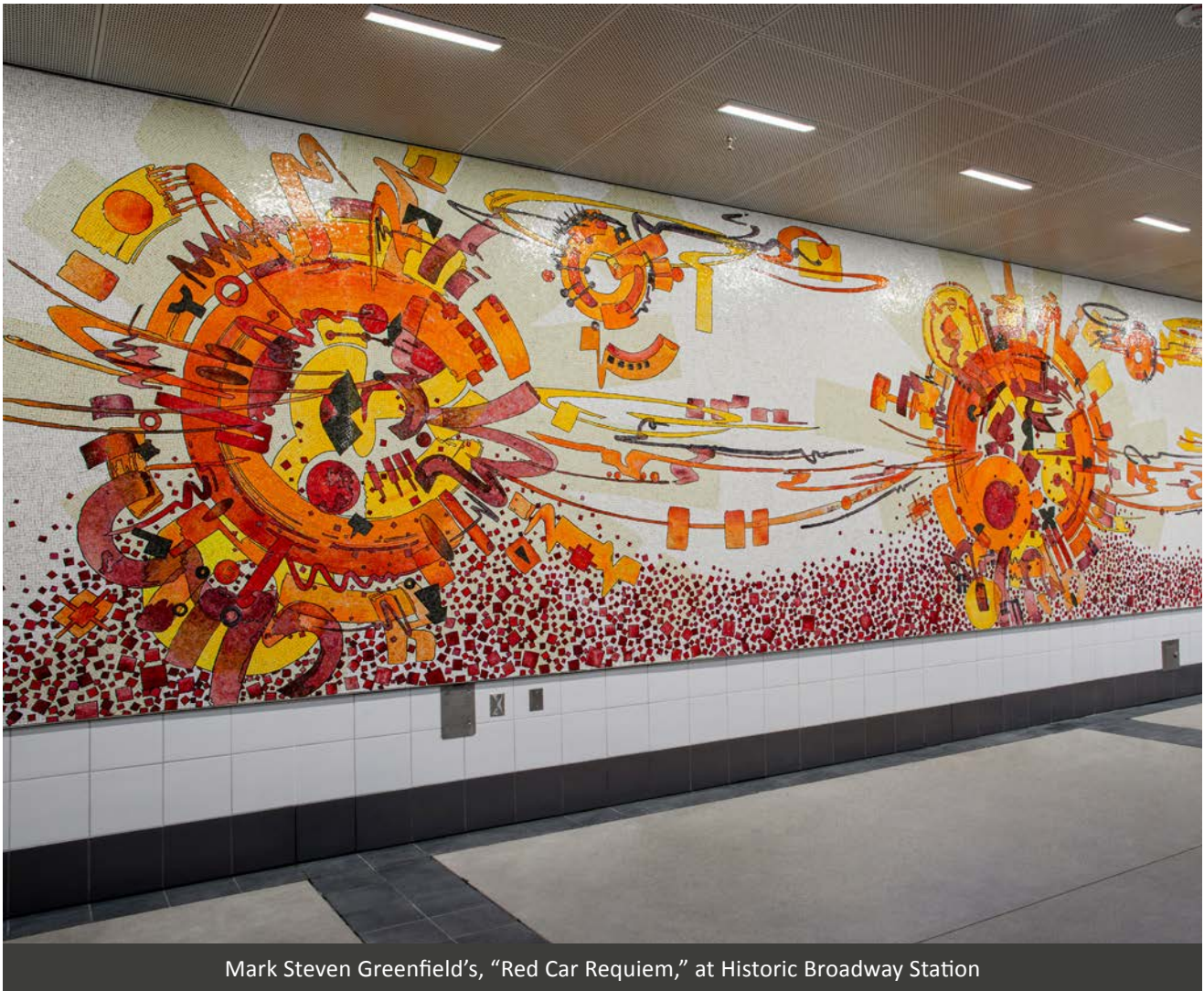
Andrea Bowers's, "The People United ("El pueblo unido jamás será vencido," Sergio Ortega and Quilapayun; "Brown Beret 13 Point Political Program," La Causa)," at Historic Broadway Station

While the fact that Downtown plays a key role in the life of the region has remained a constant, the nature of that role has changed dramatically, as both Downtown and the region have evolved. Starting as the center of all activity in the early days of the city, time had seen residential development expand out to the suburbs, taking with it much of the activity associated with everyday life, while commercial and civic activity remained concentrated in the core.

The balance began to shift back with the Downtown Renaissance of the last 20 years, which has seen phenomenal growth in the residential population, and a boom of new attractions and amenities giving Downtown an identity beyond the office towers, as a dynamic community and exciting destination.

As the name suggests, Metro's Regional Connector embodies Downtown's renewed role as the hub that connects Angelenos – to each other, to jobs, shopping, services, activities, and amenities. While other rail projects may span greater distance or have more stops, the Regional Connector's 1.9 miles of track and three new stations has more strategic significance for the city and its transit system. Like DTLA, the Regional Connector punches above its weight because its importance and impact reach across the county and beyond.

Connecting the Region



Mark Steven Greenfield's, "Red Car Requiem," at Historic Broadway Station

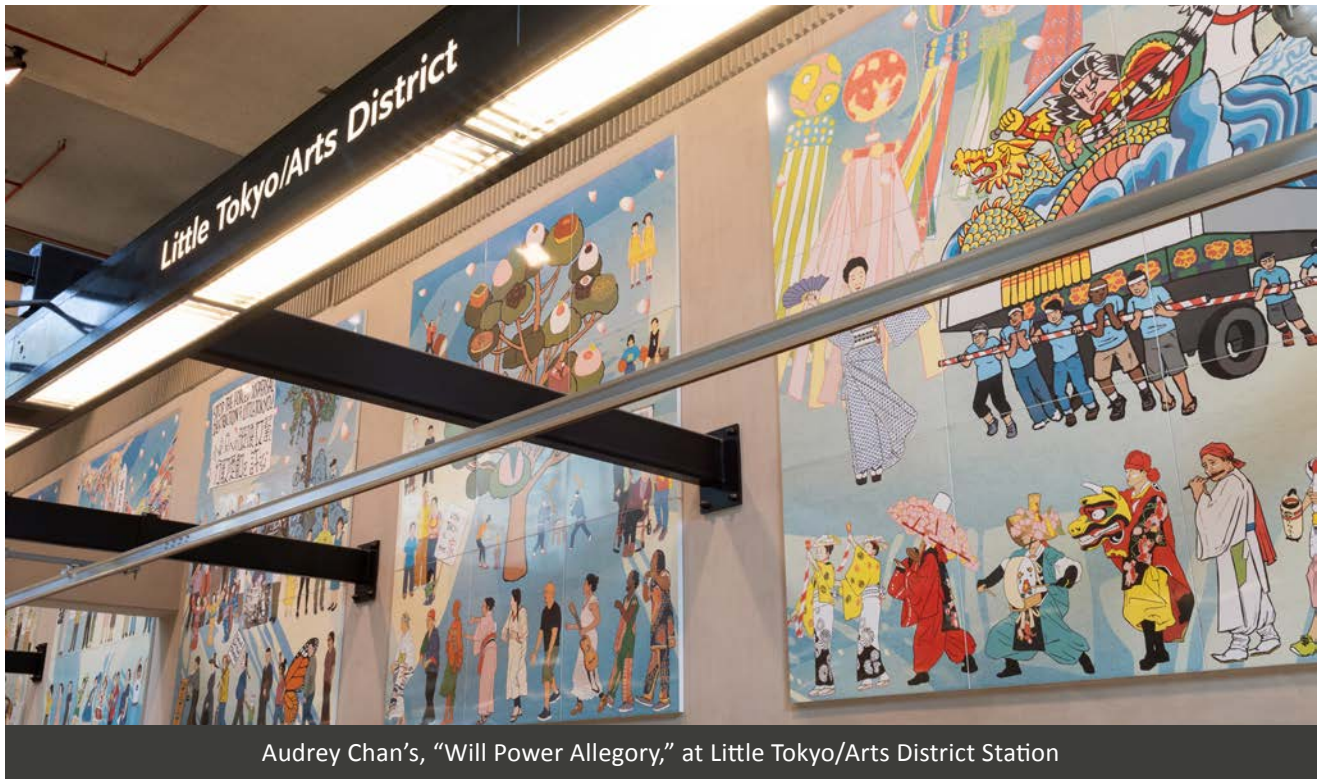
To understand the importance of Downtown as a hub for the city and why the Regional Connector is such a significant project, it is critical to understand the nature of the region they both serve. While the common image of the LA is one of unending sprawl, closer examination instead reveals it as a multitude of activity centers – concentrations of population, culture, and commerce – spread across the city.

And at the central point of that constellation of activity centers is Downtown, which has much higher concentrations of residents and businesses, as well as assets, amenities, and attractions than the rest of the region, and exerts a greater impact on it as well.

A critical challenge for Los Angeles is that while hubs of activity bring people together in their own areas, the connections between its many communities are less robust and convenient, with lack of adequate transit to many of these locations limiting the potential for diverse, equitable, and inclusive access.

The Regional Connector helps address this issue by connecting four of LA's light rail lines into one system and enabling one-seat travel to and through Downtown to a range of key destinations around the region.

As a result of this new alignment, trips that used to require one or more transfers can now be completed without ever giving up your seat, making it substantially more convenient and reducing travel times.



Audrey Chan's, "Will Power Allegory," at Little Tokyo/Arts District Station

Downtown At The Center

With the context of regional activity centers and the need to improve transportation across the region in mind, the role of Downtown comes into sharper focus. Due to DTLA's scale, density, and accessibility, it naturally emerges as the place to serve many of the needs that cannot be met on a local level.

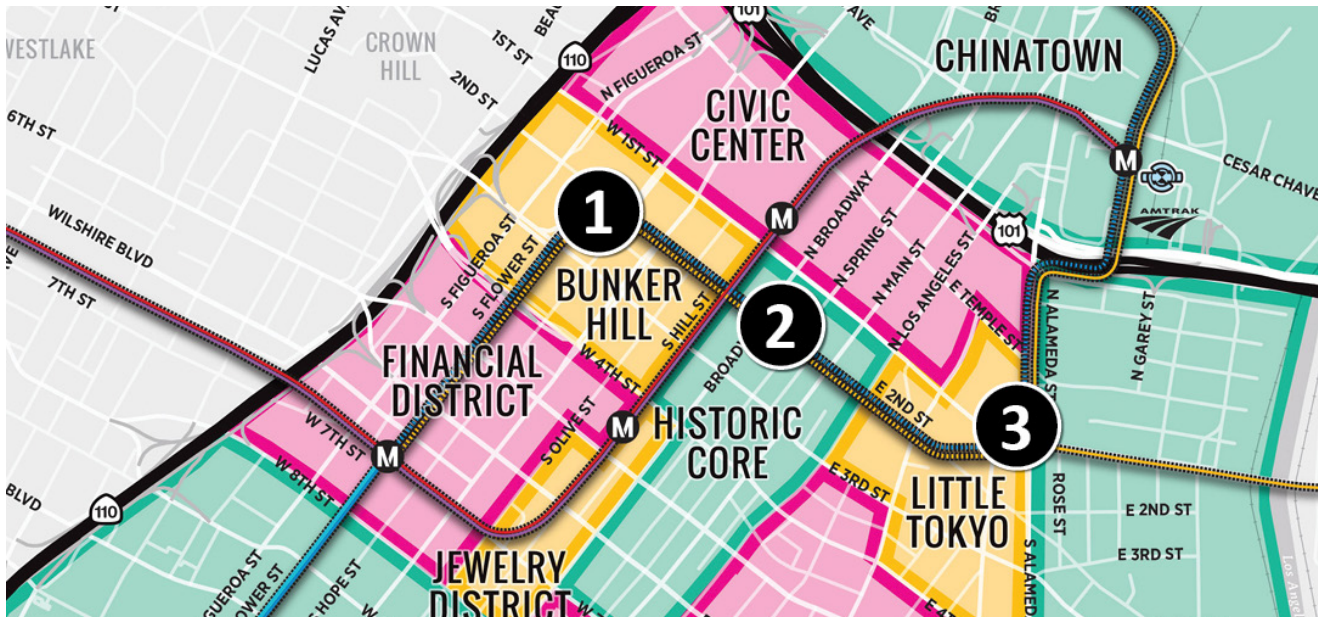
These include:

- Experiences for Angelenos: From the LA Auto Show to New Year's Eve celebrations, Downtown has become the go-to location for events intended to draw large numbers of people from around the region.
- Arts, Culture & Entertainment: With two major art museums, The Broad and MOCA, featuring free admission, The Music Center, one of the largest performing arts centers in the United States, along with a multitude of other attractions and venues large and small, Downtown LA has cultural offerings unparalleled in the region.
- World-Class Cuisine and Experiential Retail: With an average of half a million people in Downtown on an average day, retailers and restaurateurs have seized on the opportunity to make Downtown the place where they can gain maximum exposure to enable the creation of unique.

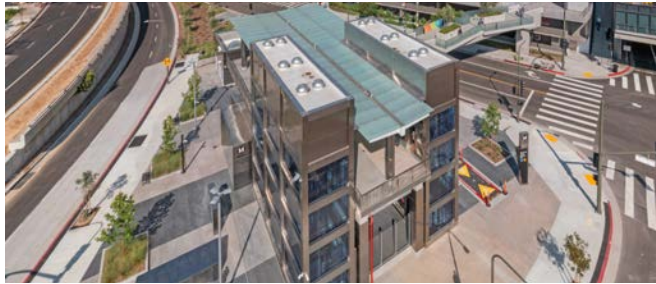
The Regional Connector greatly improves access to these and other major attractions and popular destinations for people from across the city. The significance of this aspect of the project is exemplified by the locations of the stations and embodied by the world-class design of the stations themselves.

While the ability to serve these purposes is what sets Downtown apart from other LA activity centers, it should be noted that DTLA is also its own activity center. With almost 100,000 residents in Downtown and more in the immediately surrounding area, DTLA is as much a place where people buy groceries as it is a place for a special event. These true "Downtowners" give the area life and make it feel like a distinct community. It is this combination of the local, the regional, and the global that creates the dynamic urban experience that fuels Downtown as a place people want to go.

Meet The Stations



By looking at the three new stations that opened with the Regional Connector, we can see how much more of Downtown is now accessible via convenient transit access.



1) Bunker Hill/Grand Av Arts Station

As the first rail station with direct access to Bunker Hill, this station improves access to some of the region's top cultural attractions and 8 million square feet of office space.



2) Historic Broadway Station

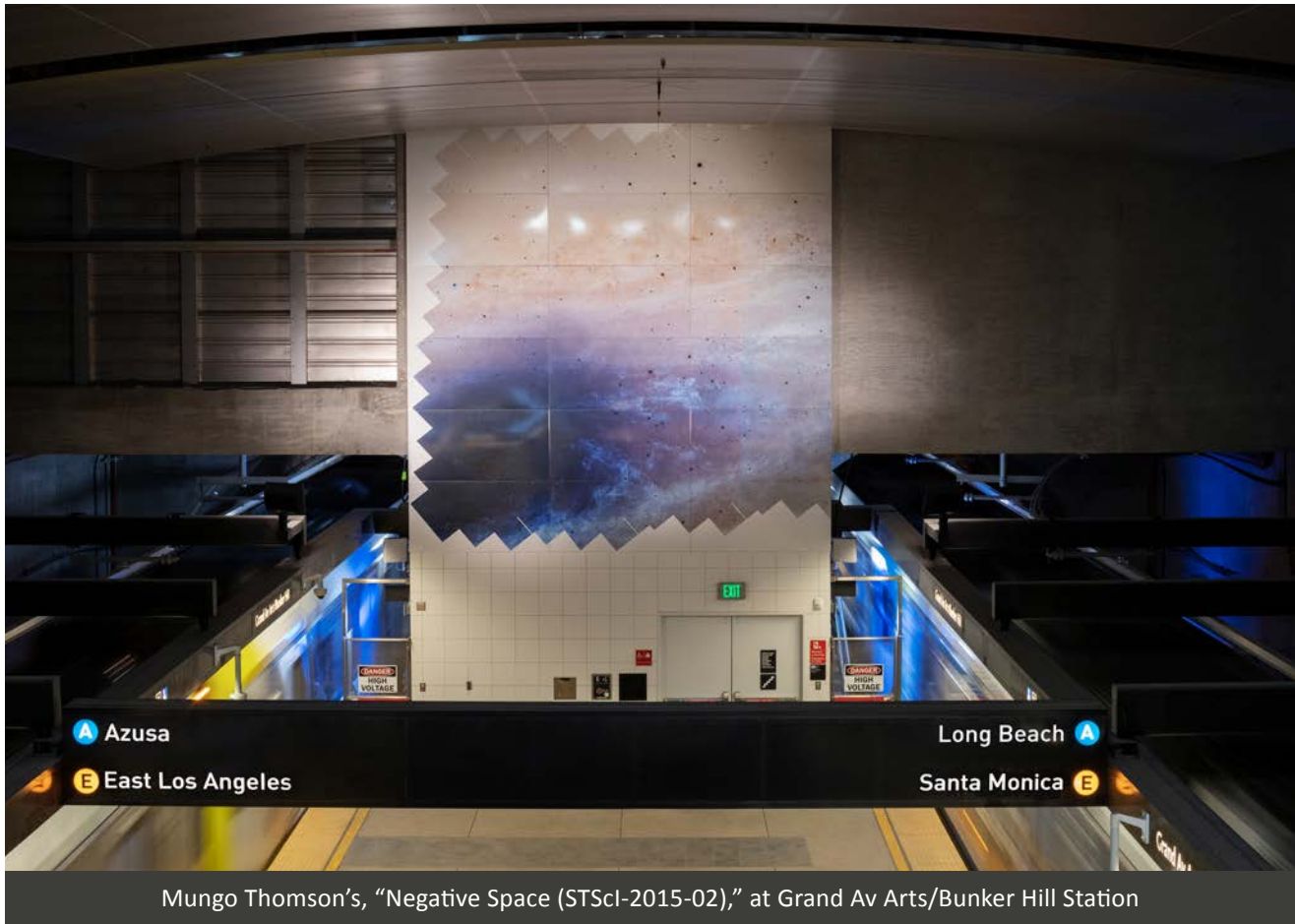
Located just steps from Grand Central Market, this station is the gateway to both historic Broadway and the area's courts and civic institutions.



3) Little Tokyo-Arts District Station

Located between two of Downtown's most popular neighborhood destinations, Little Tokyo and the Arts District, this station is surrounded by eclectic shops, distinct dining experiences, and some of the hottest nightlife in LA.

LA's Transit Oriented Future



Mungo Thomson's, "Negative Space (STScI-2015-02)," at Grand Av Arts/Bunker Hill Station

The Regional Connector is just one of many major improvements underway or in the pipeline for Metro – projects that will further reshape LA's mobility landscape. These include a direct rail connection to LAX, the subway extension to Santa Monica, and the Sepulveda Pass subway connecting the San Fernando Valley to the Westside. Although these plans and projects encompass all of LA, they also reinforce Downtown's centrality and importance to the region.

Moreover, while the principal intention behind these investments is to reduce the region's reliance on automobiles by making transit more convenient and accessible, it is also a critical element in the region's plans to address the housing shortage and affordability crisis through the development of Transit Oriented Communities. Chief among these communities is Downtown itself, which is slated to more than double its population by 2040. The goal of this vision is to have hundreds of thousands more Angelenos using convenient access to transit every day as a principal means of transportation. Perhaps even more ambitious is the vision of millions of visitors coming to LA for the 2028 Olympics and being able to experience the region without needing a car at all.

Taken together, the impact of these investments is to reinforce Downtown as the central hub not just of the transportation system, but of the region itself. By design, the Metro rail system is built around improving accessibility in and out of Downtown. By connecting regional activity centers to Downtown and establishing Downtown as an activity center for the entire region, natural connections emerge that support greater connectivity and encourage transit use. Put another way, an investment in Downtown is an investment that benefits everyone in the City of LA and in the LA region.



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