



DONATE

This is an archival story that predates current editorial management.

LEARN MORE ▾

ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

L.A.'s First Subway Terminal Is Being Resurrected As A Shopping Center

By [Julia Wick](#)

Published May 15, 2016 11:00 PM

Before you read this story...

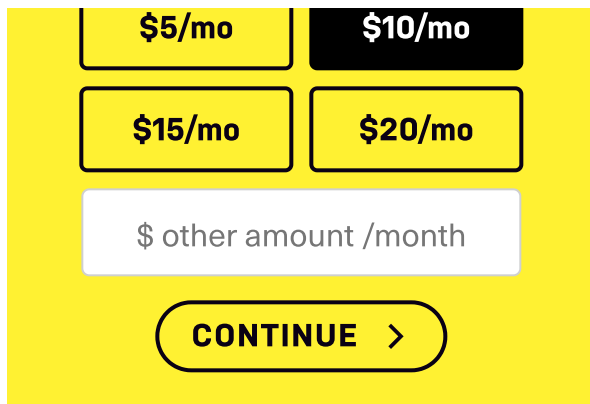
Dear reader, we're asking for your help to keep local reporting available for all today during our fall fundraiser. Your financial support keeps stories like this one free to read, instead of hidden behind paywalls. We believe when reliable

LOCAL NEWS NEEDS YOU!

Take a moment today to power reliable local reporting. Your support in any amount will unlock a \$12,000 gift: be one of the 300 readers we need to donate by 11/9 to unlock this important gift for local news.

Donate Now >





\$5/mo \$10/mo

\$15/mo \$20/mo

\$ other amount /month

CONTINUE >

The former underground hub for L.A.'s late, great Red Car system will soon be creatively repurposed as subterranean office and retail space.

Upon its completion in 1925, the Subway Terminal Building site served as L.A.'s primary downtown streetcar terminal, connecting downtown to Hollywood and, by extension, the Westside. Designed by Schultze and Weaver (the same architects behind L.A.'s legendary Biltmore Hotel), the Renaissance Revival-style building's namesake terminal was once at the nexus of transportation in Los Angeles.

According to the L.A. Conservancy, over 65,000 workers and shoppers passed beneath the building daily during the Pacific Electric interurban railway's heyday (service for L.A.'s OG subway line was tragically discontinued in 1955).

The [Downtown News](#) reports that Cleveland-based developer

LOCAL NEWS NEEDS YOU!

Take a moment today to power reliable local reporting. Your support in any amount will unlock a \$12,000 gift: be one of the 300 readers we need to donate by 11/9 to unlock this important gift for local news.

Donate Now >

After being vacant for more than a decade, the building's upper floors were turned into fancy apartments back in 2005, but the recession halted Forest City's original plans to develop the below-ground space.

Frank Frallicciardi, director of development for Forest City Residential West, told the Downtown News that his company is in the process of bringing the 91-year-old edifice up to fire and safety standards, and that they are waiting on major restoration work until tenants are secured. Forest City's brokerage firm JLL compared the possible new complex to Grand Central Market, citing which they called an example of "the rise of really interesting mixes of food halls and creative offices."

"We're trying to keep the history of the building while creating a really great center for boutique retail and restaurants" Danielle Cornwell, a senior associate with JLL, told the Downtown News.

The lower levels of the Subway Terminal Building have been vacant for decades, but Forest City has big plans for the future. The gorgeous Art Deco-styled 40,000 square-foot ground floor, with its ornate columns and soaring copper ceilings, will soon house an open market of vendors, "flanked by office space and larger eateries," according to the Downtown News. The Downtown News also described Forest City's plans for the two

LOCAL NEWS NEEDS YOU!

Take a moment today to power reliable local reporting. Your support in any amount will unlock a \$12,000 gift: be one of the 300 readers we need to donate by 11/9 to unlock this important gift for local news.

[Donate Now >](#)

serve as office space for one or two tenants, possibly for architecture or design firms. (The ceiling will not be raised, he said.) The lowest level has 20-foot ceilings and about 45,000 square feet of space. Frallicciardi expects it would hold up to three tenants, and said a gym might be a fit. The old train tunnel is at one end of the floor, though it is owned by the city and closed off.

The underground concourse and former terminal have already since the last trolley car rolled out more than half a century ago. According to the [L.A. Times](#), the federal government took over the space in the 1950s. It was used for offices by the Social Security Administration and later as a medical facility by the then-Veterans Administration. In the 60s, it doubled as a [fallout shelter](#), and thousands of 17 1/2-gallon water cans were stored by Civil Defense in the old Pacific Electric subway terminal (the cans were all empty; they would be filled by fire units in event of an emergency). No word as to when construction will start.

LOCAL NEWS NEEDS YOU!

Take a moment today to power reliable local reporting. Your support in any amount will unlock a \$12,000 gift: be one of the 300 readers we need to donate by 11/9 to unlock this important gift for local news.

[Donate Now >](#)

[About Us](#)

[LAist Staff](#)

[Careers](#)

[Advertising](#)

[Contact Us](#)

[Support Us](#)

[Newsletters](#)

[Editorial Ethics & Guidelines](#)

[DEI Statement](#)

[Style Guide](#)

[Diversity Report](#)

Keep up with LAist

Our top stories delivered weeknights

Email



SUBSCRIBE

© 2022 Southern California Public Radio - All Rights Reserved

[Terms of Service](#) [Privacy Policy](#)

LOCAL NEWS NEEDS YOU!

Take a moment today to power reliable local reporting. Your support in any amount will unlock a \$12,000 gift: be one of the 300 readers we need to donate by 11/9 to unlock this important gift for local news.

Donate Now >