

Urbanize Los Angeles

What was L.A.'s best groundbreaking of 2022? Vote now!

This year saw construction starts for new towers, micro-unit apartment buildings, and an NFL team headquarters

DECEMBER 27, 2022, 6:00AM STEVEN SHARP [48 COMMENTS](#)



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Closing in on a third post-pandemic year, sky-high construction costs and uncertain market conditions have put many projects on ice - but it

wasn't all bad in 2022. Shovels hit dirt for numerous big-budget projects across the region, including some L.A.'s future tallest buildings, sprawling apartment complexes, and even a new headquarters for an NFL team. But only one of them can be the best groundbreaking of 2022 - so which is it? Cast your vote at the bottom of the page - or let us know what we missed in the comment section.

This poll will be open through Thursday, so act fast.



Aerial view looking westWorks Progress Architecture

The Arts District gets a skyscraper Yeah, okay - this one is kind of fudging it, but hear me out. In 2020, Carmel Partners began excavation work at 520 Mateo Street, where the San Francisco-based developer had recently secured approvals to build a 35-story tower featuring 475 live/work apartments, accompanied by 105,000 square feet of offices and 20,000 square feet of retail. And then, news emerged that the project had

ties to the corruption scandal centered on former L.A. City Councilmember Jose Huizar, who is alleged to have improperly accepted bribes from a former Carmel executive during the approval process for 520 Mateo. While some of Huizar's colleagues briefly pushed to claw back entitlements for the project, **Carmel has since paid a \$1.2-million fine to resolve its involvement** in the corruption scandal, allowing ground-up construction to kick off this year for the tower. The project's name has been announced as "Alloy," but personally, I like "Teflon" for this one.



Aerial perspective of the new Chargers headquarters and training facilityLos Angeles Chargers

The Chargers build a campus in El Segundo Sure, their game day house is **the spectacular SoFi Stadium**, but the NFL's L.A. Chargers need somewhere else to camp out from Monday through Saturday. Starting in 2024, that will be the team's new headquarters and training facility, which is now rising on a 14-acre site in El Segundo that was once part of Raytheon's L.A. campus. Plans call for a 145,000-square-foot main building with offices, a hospitality club, eSports gaming and content

studios, and a 3,100-square-foot media center, as well as three natural grass fields with space for more than 5,000 spectators. [Click here to see how construction has progressed since April 2022.](#)



PERSPECTIVE LOOKING SOUTH FROM OLYMPIC BOULEVARD

Aerial view

looking southChris Dikeakos Architects

Onni breaks ground on its biggest L.A. tower yet In the Spring, prolific Vancouver-based developer Onni Group commenced work on its largest L.A. project to date: a 60-story, 700-unit residential high-rise at the intersection of Olympic Boulevard and Hill Street in Downtown Los Angeles. The tower, the first high-rise in L.A. to break ground since the onset of the pandemic, will also rank as the fourth tallest in Los Angeles at completion, rising roughly 760 feet in height. As any regular reader surely knows, Onni is not done with the Downtown area - it also has projects coming up **at the former L.A. Times campus**, as well as **its own Arts District high-rise which** would rival the under-construction Carmel project mentioned above.



Street-level view of 200 W Mesnager StreetGBD Architects

Some new apartments finally start rising near L.A. State Historic Park in Chinatown A decade after the City of Los Angeles adopted new zoning regulations for the neighborhood surrounding L.A. State Historic Park, the neighborhood is finally getting some new housing. In May, Portland-

based developer **NBP Capital** broke ground on a new project at 200 W. Mesnager Avenue, which will consist of six- and seven-story buildings featuring 280 apartments atop approximately 20,000 square feet of ground-floor retail and offices space. While that may be somewhat standard fare for the neighborhoods in and around Downtown Los Angeles, this project may be of interest to our wonkier readers due to its location within the **Cornfield-Arroyo Seco Specific Plan**, which has heralded for its forward-thinking concepts (at least by L.A. standards in 2011), such as the removal of mandatory parking minimums. However, a decade on, the plan has largely failed to generate new housing - with the exception of the Mesnager project and a couple of other developments in Lincoln Heights.



Aerial view looking southeastUrban Architecture Lab

573 apartments flanking Burbank's regional rail hub While development around Metro rail has been encouraged for years by L.A.'s Transit Oriented Communities guidelines, other jurisdictions in L.A. County have been less encouraging when it comes to fostering development around

Metrolink's regional rail stops. That changed in a big way this year, when LaTerra Development broke ground on a mixed-use project at 777 N. Front Street, which will feature a series of podium-type building with a combined total of 573 apartments. That project, which is sandwiched between the rail right-of-way and the I-5 freeway, could set the stage for more big projects in Downtown Burbank, **where the city is planning for a lot of growth in the coming years.**



View looking west across Flower Street Steinberg Hart

Two micro-unit developments pushing dirt in DTLA Seattle-based Housing Diversity Corp. (HDC) has been on a tear with its L.A. projects over the past few years, and kicked into high gear during 2022 by starting work on not one, but two micro-unit apartment buildings in Downtown. Located at **1411 S. Flower Street** and **1317 S. Grand Avenue**, the two eight-story buildings will featured a combined total of 374 apartments on infill sites near the A and E Lines. While paying a lot of

rent for not a lot of space is a frequent complaint amongst L.A. renters, HDC is changing things up by instead offering not a lot space - but for what might actually be considered a reasonable amount of money. The apartments at 1317 Grand are slated to average 328 square feet in size, while smaller units at 1411 Flower will be even tinier at an average size of 265 square feet. While each will include on-site affordable housing to comply with the TOC guidelines, and HDC has also indicated that it intends to set rents at levels which will attract middle-income renters to the non-deed-restricted units - roughly 80 to 120 percent of the area median income level



Aerial view of 3545 Wilshire Gruen Associates

Two more towers for Koreatown At 3545 Wilshire Boulevard in Koreatown, the developer that builds seemingly every new apartment building has a new high-rise complex in the works. Jamison Services

started work this year on 22- and 14-story buildings just north of the Wilshire/Normandie subway station, which will feature a total of 428 apartments and 10,000 square feet of retail space when completed. While Jamison has worked with Hankey Capital on tower projects before - including [the Circa towers in Downtown](#) and [Kurve on Wilshire in K-Town](#) - this project is the first time the developer has gone solo on a high-rise development (two of them, in this case). It may not be the last time, however, as Jamison is pursuing additional residential towers in [Downtown](#) and (of course) in [Koreatown](#).

- 2022 IN REVIEW

What was L.A.'s best groundbreaking of 2022? Vote now!

| | |
|--|-----------------|
| The Arts District's first high-rise at 520 Mateo | 9% (87 votes) |
| A new headquarters campus for the NFL's Chargers in El Segundo | 2% (22 votes) |
| Onni builds L.A.'s 4th tallest tower at Olympic and Hill | 28% (259 votes) |
| Finally: L.A. State Historic Park's new neighbor at 200 Mesnager | 1% (13 votes) |
| 573 Metrolink-adjacent apartments at 777 Front Street in Burbank | 49% (452 votes) |
| Twin micro-unit apartment buildings on Flower and Grand in DTLA | 9% (81 votes) |
| Jamison's two-tower complex next to Wilshire/Normandie Station | 2% (16 votes) |
| Total votes: 930 | |