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Raymond Chan, former L.A. deputy mayor, charged in federal City Hall corruption case



Federal prosecutors have been pursuing a wide-ranging corruption investigation into real estate development and City Hall. (Los Angeles Times)

By [David Zahniser](#), [Joel Rubin](#)

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A former senior aide to Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti has been charged with racketeering conspiracy, bribery and other crimes in the ongoing federal probe into corruption at City Hall, according to court records made public Monday.

Raymond Chan, a deputy mayor who oversaw economic development for Garcetti in 2016 and 2017, is the latest figure to be accused of playing a role in a sprawling scheme allegedly run by ousted Councilman Jose Huizar. Prosecutors say both men were involved in shaking down

developers seeking help pushing downtown real estate projects through the city's approval process.

In a statement, U.S. Atty. Nick Hanna said Huizar, Chan and their network of associates "repeatedly violated the public trust by soliciting and accepting numerous cash bribes and other financial benefits, turning Huizar's City Council seat into a money-making criminal enterprise."

Along with Chan, prosecutors Monday announced corruption charges against Wei Huang, the chairman of a Chinese real estate company that proposed a 77-story skyscraper on Figueroa Street, and Dae Yong Lee, a Bel-Air developer who won approval for a new 20-story residential tower on Hill Street in 2017. Companies operated by the two men were also named as defendants.

The corruption case has resulted in guilty pleas from former City Councilman [Mitchell Englander](#), former Huizar aide [George Esparza](#), one [longtime City Hall lobbyist](#) and a pair of real estate consultants. Huizar, who left office earlier this year, has pleaded [not guilty](#) to an array of charges, including racketeering, bribery and money laundering.

Chan worked for the city for 33 years, serving at one point as the top executive overseeing the Department of Building and Safety, which reviews building plans and inspects construction projects. When he retired in 2017, Garcetti praised him as a "[true public servant](#)" who had played a role creating "unprecedented growth" across the city.

Chan came under scrutiny from FBI agents investigating alleged pay-to-play activities involving Huizar and a series of real estate developments proposed in the downtown section of Huizar's district. Chan was named in a 2018 [federal search warrant](#) seeking evidence of possible crimes involving more than a dozen people.



Raymond Chan, left, and Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti (Los Angeles Department of Buildings; AP / Los Angeles Department of Buildings; AP)

Shortly after leaving City Hall, Chan created a firm called CCC Investment Group with George Chiang, a real estate broker who represented developers with projects in downtown and elsewhere.

Chiang agreed to [plead guilty](#) earlier this year, admitting to participating in a [scheme](#) in which a Chinese real estate company bribed Huizar in exchange for help with the redevelopment of the Luxe Hotel in downtown Los Angeles.

Chan was praised, while working for the city, for cutting red tape to help smooth the development process. Critics [argued](#) that under his leadership, the department treated developers, not the broader public, as their customers.

While heading the city's Building and Safety agency, Chan was the subject of an ethics complaint filed by opponents of the Millennium skyscraper project in Hollywood. Critics said Chan had a [conflict of interest](#), since his son was a paid intern at a law firm that represented Millennium's developer.

After the complaint was filed, Chan said he had been cleared of wrongdoing.

Times staff writer Emily Alpert Reyes contributed to this report.