

## Communication from Public

**Name:**

**Date Submitted:** 06/22/2021 10:31 PM

**Council File No:** 20-0680

**Comments for Public Posting:** Attached is a document related to Case No.  
CPC-2019-4908-DB-SPR-1A. Council File Number: 20-0680.  
Scheduled item for Council on Wednesday, June 23, 2021

**Re: CPC-2019-4908-DB-SPR/CF 20-0680**

**The Project description is required to be stable.**

In light of the inconsistencies in the project description, indicated with evidence in both documents from the appellants' representative and in communications from the public, including but not limited to:

- the listing of the project as BOTH a "Multifamily Residential apartment" and also as a "Mixed-Use development"

and

- the lack of inclusion of the Redevelopment Plan (RDP) in the Project's Case Number and description in public notices and City Planning Documents - and the subsequent filing of an application for 1309-1331 South Pacific Avenue Pacific Corridor Redevelopment Plan Project Compliance (including the Administrative Review and Referral form) - and then the withdrawal of Pacific Corridor Redevelopment Plan compliance application for 1309-1331 South Pacific Avenue

The Applicant's project description has given conflicting signals to decision makers and the public about the nature and scope of the project.

**Citations:**

A project description that gives conflicting signals to decision makers and the public about the nature and scope of the project is fundamentally inadequate and misleading – *Citizens for a Sustainable Treasure Island v. City and County of San Francisco* (2014) 227 Cal.App.4th 1036, 1052.

The Guidelines specify that every EIR must set forth a project description that is sufficient to allow an adequate evaluation and review of the environmental impact. *San Joaquin Raptor Rescue Center v. County of Merced* (2007) 149 Cal.App.4th 645, 654.

Recent case law confirms that an "accurate, stable, and finite project description as the sine qua non of an informative and legally sufficient EIR..." *Stopthemillenniumhollywood.com v. City of Los Angeles* (2019) 39 Cal.App.5th 1 at 308.

## Communication from Public

**Name:** Appellant Citizens Protecting San Pedro  
**Date Submitted:** 06/22/2021 10:41 PM  
**Council File No:** 20-0680  
**Comments for Public Posting:** Please assure that the City Councilmembers are provided this June 22nd rebuttal letter to the applicant's June 22nd rebuttal letter prior to the meeting of Wednesday June 23rd, 10 am, agenda item 9, and that it is posted to the Council File prior to the meeting. Thank you.

June 22, 2021

Los Angeles City Council  
Attn: City Clerk  
200 N. Spring Street, Room 395  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

[Clerk.CPS@lacity.org](mailto:Clerk.CPS@lacity.org), [Clerk-ENSLA@lacity.org](mailto:Clerk-ENSLA@lacity.org)

Re: Case No. CPC-2019-4908-DB-SPR; CF 20-0680 (1309-1331 South Pacific Avenue) – Appellant’s Response to June 22, 2021 Applicant Letter re. Pacific Corridor Redevelopment Plan

Honorable Members of the City Council,

First, it is unconscionable that during this City of L.A. affordable housing crisis that the City Council would not choose to implement HSC Section 33413(b)(1) and require 15% low- or moderate-income affordable housing for this project, as it may do at its discretion. This shows that our city decision makers are not really interested in solving our serious affordable housing crisis, which directly impacts our homelessness crisis, when it has the tools at its disposal to do so. The City can deny the project on this basis as it has the discretion to require this critical affordable housing so that it can meet its overall requirement over time. Why would the City wait to implement this critical component of the city’s redevelopment plans. There is absolutely no reason to put this off until years from now and every reason not to do so. Again, it’s shameful that this City Councilman and his fellow Councilmembers have not chosen to require the additional affordable housing. The 15% redevelopment plan requirement is not based on the density bonus calculation, which is a percentage of base density, but rather us a percentage of all new units. As per LAMC Section 11.5.14 B.2. states that: Whenever the Redevelopment Regulations conflict with provisions contained in Chapter 1 of the LAMC or any other relevant City ordinances, the Redevelopment Regulations shall supersede those provisions, unless the applicable Redevelopment Regulations specifically provide otherwise or are amended.

The numerous errors in Form CP-3566 RPA Administrative Review and Referral Pacific Corridor that indicate the project is a mixed-use project are not “scrivener’s errors.” That is nonsense. These are gross errors and result in erroneous conclusions for the subject review.

On page 5 of 5 of the form, just before the signatures, is a box for “Additional Staff Notes.” These notes state that the “proposed mixed-use development” “generally confirms” with Sec. 503.4 of the Pacific Corridor Redevelopment Plan, which states:

§ 503.4 Residential Uses Within Commercial and Industrial Areas

The Agency may permit appropriately designed and properly located residential and mixed use development within Commercial and Industrial areas, consistent with the applicable Community Plan as it now reads or as it may be amended from time to time in the future, provided that the proposed use shall conform to the following criteria:

- 12 -

- 
1. Promote community revitalization;
  2. Promote the goals and objectives of the Plan;
  3. Be compatible with and appropriate for the Commercial uses in the vicinity;
  4. Include amenities which are appropriate to the size and type of housing units proposed;  
and
  5. Meet design and location criteria required by the Agency.

In fact, because the project is not mixed use, it is not in compliance with Sec. 503.4 as it is not compatible with the commercial uses in the vicinity. In addition, by its 100% residential nature, the project specifically does not promote the vast majority of the objectives of the Plan, including Community Image and Vision, Economic Revitalization and Job Creation, Development of Tourist Oriented Facilities, Social Services and Community Recreation Facilities, Diversification of Retail and Entertainment Activities, Historic Preservation and Promotion of Cultural Heritage, Public Improvements and Amenities, and Port Involvement and Participation in Community Revitalization.

Thus, the conclusion in the administrative review that the project conforms to the objectives of the Pacific Corridor Redevelopment Plan and thus complies with Sec. 503.4 is in error and the gross errors in writing mixed use development rather than residential development directly contribute to that error.

Also, page 3 - 4 of the form, questions 504.1, 504.2, 504.3, 507, 508, 511, 513, 514, 515, 520, 521 and 522 are in error. Below is an excerpt from the original appeal document, which details the substantial evidence showing non-compliance with these sections of the form, which have many of the same requirements as for the redevelopment plan.

**The Site Plan Review Findings are in error and the SPR entitlement cannot be approved.**

Not only does the project not conform to the San Pedro Community Plan and the goals of the CPIO (see attached CPIO-Purposes + CPIO-Design Guidelines, which among other things appears to require a corner entrance), but the Determination letter does not in any way address the Pacific Corridor Redevelopment Plan, which is valid until 2033, nor does it conform to its detailed standards and guidelines.

Links to the Pacific Corridor Redevelopment Plan:

<https://planning.lacity.org/plans-policies/overlays/pacific-corridors>

[https://planning.lacity.org/odocument/1e917a9c-2851-407d-b664-20d60d67e439/PacificCorridor\\_DFD.pdf](https://planning.lacity.org/odocument/1e917a9c-2851-407d-b664-20d60d67e439/PacificCorridor_DFD.pdf)

The project clearly violates the Pacific Corridor Redevelopment Plan Vision Statement:

San Pedro is a stable community that provides a high quality of life for its residents -- one that builds upon its distinct natural beauty, rich cultural heritage, and proximity to the Port and waterfront, while retaining the community's small town feel for multiple generations of San Pedrans.

It has been proven throughout this Appeal that *"The project is NOT in substantial conformance with the purposes, intent and provisions of the General Plan, applicable community plan, and any applicable specific plan..."* and in addition the Pacific Corridor Redevelopment Plan was not even considered or listed in the CPC Determination.

In addition, re. Land Use Element – San Pedro Community Plan, the Determination letter erroneously states that *"the proposed project aligns with the intent of the 2017 San Pedro Community Plan."*

See following excerpts from the San Pedro Community Plan and explanation of violations (a – f):

- a. RE: Page F-7 Goal LU3: Multi-family residential neighborhoods with a mix of ownership and rental units that are well-designed, safe, provide amenities for residents, and exhibit the architectural characteristics and qualities that distinguish San Pedro.

There is not a mix of ownership and rental units in this project as per Goal LU3. Also, the project, a generic contemporary-style urban infill design, in no way exhibits the architectural characteristics and qualities that distinguish San Pedro.

- b. RE: Page F-7 Policy LU3.1: Neighborhood stability. Stabilize and improve existing multi-family residential neighborhoods, allowing for growth in areas where there are sufficient public infrastructure and services and where quality of life can be maintained or improved.

The project's size is grossly out of sync with the surrounding neighborhood and it will shade adjacent residents' homes for much of the day, reducing their quality of life. The public infrastructure on Pacific, including utilities, is outdated and insufficient. The project does not provide for any infrastructure upgrades for water, sewer, streets, power or cable. There is also insufficient public transportation as the bus schedules are too infrequent to qualify the area as a Transit Oriented Community (TOC). The project

also does not qualify for a parking reduction under AB 744 as it is not located within one-half mile of a major transit stop--as per PRC 21155 and 21064.3, major transit stop means a site containing any of the following: (a) existing rail or bus rapid transit station, (b) a ferry terminal served by either a bus or rail transit service, (c) the intersection of two or more major bus routes with a frequency of service interval of 15 minutes or less during the morning and afternoon peak commute periods. The TOC map, as indicated by the Council District 15 office, is incorrect in that it identifies Transit -Oriented Hubs in San Pedro in areas that in fact do not qualify as such.

Residents' quality of life will not be maintained or improved but rather degraded.

- c. RE: Page F-7 Policy LU3.3: Equitable housing distribution. Provide an equitable distribution of housing types for all income groups throughout San Pedro's multi-family neighborhoods and promote mixed-income developments rather than creating concentrations of below-market-rate housing.*

The project does not provide Equitable Housing Distribution. The project provides almost 90% market rate housing in a working-class neighborhood with a median household income of \$29,650. (includes Census Tract Block Groups 297110-2 and 296901-1)

The average rent for an apartment in Los Angeles is \$2,524/month or \$30,288/year. Average local residents' entire gross income would not cover the rent in this development. And the cheapest comparable new apartments in San Pedro are \$2,000 per month or \$24,000/year - approximately 83% of the entire annual income of local residents.

Although the project succeeds in not "creating concentrations of below-market-rate housing" it is not even remotely an Equitable Housing Distribution of housing types for all income groups. Based on median incomes, it is nearly 90% unaffordable for local residents, which in fact creates an Inequitable Distribution of market-rate housing and discriminates against lower income residents.

- d. RE: Policy LU3.6: Amenities. Include amenities for residents such as on-site recreational facilities, community meeting spaces, and useable private and/or public open space in new multi-family development.*

The project reduces amenities rather than providing them. There are no on-site recreational facilities or community meeting spaces for the general public in this project. Additionally, the open space in this development has been reduced from 10,950 square feet to 8,381 square feet (20%) and setback requirements have also been reduced. This development will eliminate an entire block of commercially zoned public space and offers no usable public open space in the plans, effectively destroying opportunities for prosperity and engagement for the community.

- e. *RE: Page F-7 – Summary--The project is for the construction of a new mixed-income multi-family residential development...*

As specified above [RE: Page F-7 Policy LU3.3: Equitable housing distribution] the project is almost 90% market-rate and is not reasonably proportioned to be considered 'mixed-income.' The project largely excludes San Pedro's community members because local residents, based on their median income, will not be able to afford the units. It is a high-income multi-family residential development, with a minimal number of affordable units.

- f. *RE: Page F-7 - Summary --As shown in Exhibit "A" and Finding No. 4 below, the Project will provide design features and landscaping improvements to enhance the visual quality of the area.*

The project is not consistent with the visual or historical character of the area. Its 'design features' include a grey low-maintenance material that spans almost the entire block. The generic contemporary-style facade design violates the Design Guidelines of the San Pedro Community Plan and Pacific Corridor Redevelopment Plan that specifies: "ensuring that new development is consistent with the visual character of San Pedro and enhance the community's overall image."

There is no specific street/sidewalk/frontal landscaping delineated in the project proposal. There are no retail stores as required in the Pacific Corridor Redevelopment Plan, so the project will disrupt and discourage retail continuity and eliminate opportunity for small business.

The height will block out sunrise and sunset views, significantly decreasing the natural beauty essential to the visual quality of the area.

The project will create a grey retail-free block with no landscaping specified but will in fact remove 30 trees from the streetscape. The visual quality of the area will not be enhanced.

Also, the Site Plan Review approval necessarily relies on the project site plan included in Exhibit A of the Staff Recommendation Report. Several of the site plan pages, as well as renderings provided to the Community and to City Planning and the CPC, are inaccurate in that they purport to show Grand Avenue as located directly adjacent to the west side of the project.

The plans and renderings for this project that were provided to the community, the City and the CPC are materially in error and misleading and must be corrected, and a re-hearing is necessary.

The City has erred and abused its discretion in approving the Site Plan Review, which includes review of all Plans, the L.A. General Plan, the San Pedro Community Plan and the Pacific Corridor Redevelopment Plan.

Armbruster and the applicant err in stating that the project qualifies for an administrative review re. the Pacific Corridor Redevelopment Plan.

**A Redevelopment Plan Project Compliance entitlement is required, and this project must not move forward in the approval process until that is processed and unless that is approved.**

Sincerely,

Robin Rudisill, on behalf of Appellant  
Citizens Protecting San Pedro

## Communication from Public

**Name:**

**Date Submitted:** 06/22/2021 02:49 PM

**Council File No:** 20-0680

**Comments for Public Posting:** Attached is a document related to Case No.  
CPC-2019-4908-DB-SPR-1A Council File Number: 20-0680  
Scheduled item for Council on Wednesday, June 23, 2021

Connie Chauv, Noel Gould, Robin Rudisill (mac.com), Jamie Hall

time sensitive question RE: files uploaded for CPC-2019-4908-DB-SPR/CF 20-0680

Dear Ms. Chauv,

Last week on 6/14 and 6/15, our community group RESPCT (Residents for an Equitable San Pedro Community Today) submitted 14 documents for upload to CPC-2019-4908-DB-SPR/CF 20-0680 via the LA City Clerk Connect/Council File Management System (CMS).

However, as of today, 6/22, none of the RESPCT documents have appeared in the [Online Documents](#) section as communications from the public.

Attached are screen shots from the *Public Comment Submission Validation* email from Clerk.PublicComment@lacity.org, as well as the *Public Comment Request Confirmation* screen (which appeared after the 'Click here to Validate' button was clicked). These show that the process was properly completed by RESPCT.

Can you tell us why none of the documents from RESPCT were included in Council File: 20-0680, even though they were properly uploaded via the CMS and, and then validated and confirmed?

Has RESPCToday@gmail.com somehow been blocked from the system?

Is the CMS system not working properly?

If not, what other communications from the public have been blocked or omitted?

Fortunately, I believe the documents in question are mostly duplicates of the documents that community member Danial Nord sent to the Clerk's Office directly, which were uploaded and confirmed.

Perhaps because files from RESPCT were duplicates they were not uploaded?

Our experience in the past has been that even duplicates of documents have been included, if they were submitted/uploaded from different sources.

In addition we would like to bring to your attention that although the CMS is supposed to accept files sized up to 5 megs maximum size (see attached [screen shot](#)), the System in fact only accepts files no larger than 4 megs.

There is no indication of this when users attempt to upload files (for example the file in the attached [screen shot](#) which was 4.3 megs). The files simply do not upload, and it appears to the user that the CMS is not working, so they eventually give up.

A number of documents from both the Appellants' attorney and community members could not be uploaded because the CMS does not function properly and the instructions are incorrect and misleading RE: the stated file size.

Could you please include this entire email, including the attachments, and your response, in our Council File [CPC-2019-4908-DB-SPR/CF 20-0680]?

I have created a pdf of this email including the attachments for you to upload.

Thank you again for all of your help.

Sincerely,

RESPCT - Residents for an Equitable San Pedro Community Today

[Confirmation-with-date-time\\_screenShot.png](#) (375K) x

[RESPCT-validation-ScreenShot.png](#) (473K) x

[PublicCommentForm\\_attempt-4.3 meg-docume...](#) (1,574K) x

Send



Clerk.PublicComment@lacity.org

Tue, Jun 15, 9:11 AM (7 days ago)

☆ ↩️ ⋮

to RESPCToday ▾

To [RESPCToday@gmail.com](mailto:RESPCToday@gmail.com),

\*\*\*\*\* PLEASE DO NOT REPLY TO THIS AUTOMATED EMAIL \*\*\*\*\*

## Public Comment Submission Validation

Your Public Comment is now pending. For security purposes, please confirm your submittal by clicking on 'Click here to Validate' button below:

[Click here to Validate](#)

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**Council File Number:** 20-0680

**Comments for Public Posting:**

Attached is a document that supports the Citizens Protecting San Pedro appeal of the proposed project at 1309-1331 South Pacific Avenue. Case No. CPC-2019-4908-DB-SPR-1A Council File Number: 20-0680 Scheduled item for Council on Tuesday, June 15, 2021, 10:00 AM Agenda item 9

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If the above button is not clickable or is broken, please copy and paste the entire URL (minus any spaces) into your browser window.

<https://cityclerk.lacity.org/Confirmation/?EmailConfirmation=2&c=03219E9E-D4FC-46C9-8E64-4FCA0422B2FE&em=RESPCToday@gmail.com>

If you DO NOT want to submit this public comment, simply ignore this E-mail and do not click on the link above.

Thank you,

Office of the City Clerk  
Council & Public Services Division  
City of Los Angeles

<https://clerk.lacity.org/council-and-public-services>



## Public Comment Request Confirmed!

This comment will be uploaded to the City Clerk's Council File Management System within 24-48 business hours. You may view the comment by going to <http://lacouncilfile.com/> and entering the Council file or related key words in the search box.

Thank you,

Office of the City Clerk  
Council & Public Services Division  
City of Los Angeles  
<https://clerk.lacity.org/council-and-public-services>



# Office of the City Clerk Public Comment Form



For items considered by City Council

## DISCLAIMER

THIS IS A PUBLIC DOCUMENT THAT WILL BE POSTED ON THE CITY CLERK'S COUNCIL FILE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM.

Name (will appear as part of the public record):

E-mail Address (for verification purposes only):

Council File Number (enter numbers only):

Including a correct Council file number will help ensure expedient and accurate posting of your comment.

You can search for Council file numbers on the City Clerk's COUNCIL FILE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM.

Comments for Public Posting:

Attached is a document that supports the Citizens Protecting San Pedro appeal of the proposed project at 1309-1331 South Pacific Avenue.  
Case No. CPC-2019-4908-DB-SPR-1A  
Council File Number: 20-0680  
Scheduled item for Council on Tuesday, June 15, 2021, 10:00 AM Agenda item 9

4724 characters remaining

All pertinent documents that you wish to attach to your request should be included to ensure that all documents to attach to the Council file are received.

**THIS FILE IS 4.3 MEGS and would not upload (see attached)**

File Attachment:

Choose File 1309-1331\_PACIFIC\_incompatibility.pdf

Note: A password protected will not be processed. (5MB maximum file size)

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Email Us: CityClerk@lacity.org | (213) 978-1133



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General:

Kind: Portable Document Format (PDF)  
Size: 4,260,835 bytes (4.3 MB on disk)

Where:



Created: Saturday, June 12, 2021 at 4:17 PM

Modified: Saturday, June 12, 2021 at 4:17 PM

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More Info:

Last opened: Saturday, June 12, 2021 at 4:17 PM

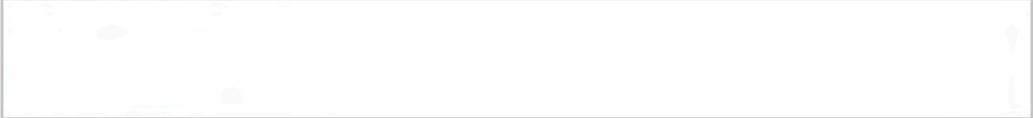
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PROPOSED PROJECT LOCATED AT 1309-1331 SOUTH PACIFIC AVENUE

The project is NOT "in substantial conformance with the purposes, intent and provisions of the General Plan, applicable community plan, and any applicable specific plan" as claimed in the Site Plan Review Findings.

The scale, density and height of development is incompatible with the surrounding areas. It is inconsistent with the General Plan Framework.

The project does not exhibit the architectural characteristics and qualities that distinguish San Pedro. It does not align with the intent of the 2017 San Pedro Community Plan.

Sharing & Permissions:

You can read and write

## Communication from Public

**Name:**

**Date Submitted:** 06/22/2021 06:15 PM

**Council File No:** 20-0680

**Comments for Public Posting:** Attached is a document related to Case No.  
CPC-2019-4908-DB-SPR-1A Council File Number: 20-0680  
Scheduled item for Council on Wednesday, June 23, 2021

Re: CPC-2019-4908-DB-SPR/CF 20-0680

See attached Los Angeles Times article:

***L.A. City Councilman Joe Buscaino runs an aggressive campaign despite little opposition***

By Seema Mehta  
March 4, 2017

**quote from Councilman Joe Buscaino:**

***“Oftentimes I feel like I’m playing real estate agent because I’m in the car with developers showing and showcasing opportunities,” he said.***

***Buscaino’s relationship with developers, however, has created his greatest vulnerability. A Times investigation in October found that the councilman was among several Los Angeles-area politicians who collectively received more than \$600,000 in campaign donations from contributors with direct or indirect ties to Samuel Leung, a Torrance-based developer.***

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**The Councilmember is required to be “neutral and unbiased”**

“[W]hen functioning in such an adjudicatory capacity, the city council must be ‘neutral and unbiased.’” (Woody’s Group, Inc. v. City of Newport Beach (2015) 233 Cal.App.4th 1012 at p. 1021, quoting *BreakZone Billiards v. City of Torrance* (2000) 81 Cal.App.4th 1205, 1234; see also Asimow et al., Cal. Practice Guide: Administrative Law (The Rutter Group 2019) ¶ 3:426, at p. 3-70 [“A decisionmaker must be unbiased (meaning that the decisionmaker has *no conflict of interest*, has *not prejudged* the specific facts of the case, and is *free of prejudice* against or in favor of any party)”).) *Petrovich Dev. Co., LLC v. City of Sacramento*, 48 Cal. App. 5th 963, 973 (2020)

POLITICS



## L.A. City Councilman Joe Buscaino runs an aggressive campaign despite little opposition



L.A. City Councilman Joe Buscaino, left, talks with Mayor Eric Garcetti in 2016. Buscaino is expected to win a second term in his San Pedro district. (Luis Sinco / Los Angeles Times)

By SEEMA MEHTA | STAFF WRITER

MARCH 4, 2017 | 4 AM

Los Angeles City Councilman Joe Buscaino, a San Pedro native son and reserve police officer, is practically a shoo-in to win reelection Tuesday. He lacks substantial opposition and is known as a hometown darling.

Yet Buscaino has spent more than a quarter of a million dollars on his reelection bid, hired consultants who worked on the presidential campaigns of President Obama and Hillary Clinton, and is appearing in television ads across the city.



The consultants and advertising are aimed at passing an obscure ballot measure related to waterfront development in the Port of Los Angeles, a driving force in Buscaino's 15th City Council District.

All the effort, political observers say, might be a sign that Buscaino is trying to raise his profile to possibly run for higher office or to mine a special set of circumstances that could allow him to serve on the City Council for 15 years, a tenure unprecedented in the modern era of term limits.

"This certainly looks like a little bit of an upward mobility play," said Raphael J. Sonenshein, executive director of the Edmund G. "Pat" Brown Institute for Public Affairs at Cal State L.A. "For everyone in Los Angeles politics, the next few years could become target-rich opportunities."

The biggest question is whether Mayor Eric Garcetti will run for governor or U.S. Senate in 2018, creating a vacancy in the mayor's office.

Becoming popular enough to mount a successful citywide campaign is a challenge for all local politicians, but it is especially so for those in Buscaino's district, which includes San Pedro, Wilmington, Harbor City and Watts.

Few have been able to do it aside from the late Kenneth Hahn, who served on the county Board of Supervisors for 40 years, and his children, former Mayor James Hahn and Supervisor Janice Hahn, a former congresswoman.

"It's a district where, if you want to get known to a wider city electorate, you have to work for it," Sonenshein said. "Unless your last name is Hahn."

Buscaino said he remains focused on his district, notably efforts to revitalize its aging waterfront, build housing and persuade businesses to locate there. He also left himself an opening.

*This certainly looks like a little bit of an upward mobility play.*



“You have to be ready for anything that comes your way,” Buscaino said. “But my main goal is getting reelected on March 7.”

While virtually unknown in most of the city, he is a favorite son in San Pedro — the power base of his district and a close-knit coastal enclave that is geographically and culturally removed from the rest of the city. The port is the lifeblood of the community of nearly 80,000 residents, including many Italians, Croatians and Latinos.

Buscaino, 42, is a first-generation Italian American whose parents immigrated to San Pedro to work in the fishing industry. He served as senior class president at San Pedro High School before joining the Los Angeles Police Department. Voters around town who profess to know little about the city’s elections immediately recognize his name.

“He went to high school with my brother,” said Andrea Mungaray, 46.

She said she approved of the job Buscaino has done, especially the redevelopment of the waterfront. Last year, the City Council approved a \$150-million plan to turn a 30-acre area into the San Pedro Public Market, complete with eateries, office space, a Ferris wheel and other amenities.

“I would like to see a waterfront like in San Francisco, something like that where people are going to go,” Mungaray said.

Buscaino helped place Measure P on Tuesday’s ballot and appears in citywide television ads promoting it. The measure is designed to encourage waterfront redevelopment by allowing builders to obtain 66-year leases of port property instead of the current 50-year limit.

The \$200,000 being spent on the Measure P ads is separate from the \$270,000 Buscaino has spent on his reelection, with large outlays for polling, mailers and campaign consultants.

*Joe’s been working hand in hand with us.*



Developing the waterfront and other parts of the district is a top priority, Buscaino said.

“Oftentimes I feel like I’m playing real estate agent because I’m in the car with developers showing and showcasing opportunities,” he said.

Buscaino’s relationship with developers, however, has created his greatest vulnerability. A Times investigation in October found that the councilman was among several Los Angeles-area politicians who collectively received more than \$600,000 in campaign donations from contributors with direct or indirect ties to Samuel Leung, a Torrance-based developer.

Leung had been lobbying public officials to approve a \$72-million apartment complex in the 15th District. Buscaino, who [received \\$94,700 of the donations](#), supported a zoning change to accommodate the project despite neighborhood opposition.

The Los Angeles County district attorney’s office has opened a review, and the state’s Fair Political Practices Commission is [investigating](#) the donations. Some of the donors say they knew nothing about the contributions.

Buscaino said he supports the investigation, but defended his support for the 352-unit Sea Breeze project.

“I am thirsting for development. I’m thirsting for housing. I’m thirsting for investment to come into my district,” Buscaino said. “Any doubt I’m doing it for the purpose of campaign contributions – it’s not right.”

One of his rivals, Caney Arnold, has called on Buscaino to return the donations. But neither Arnold, a former Defense Department employee, nor Buscaino’s other competitor, music industry executive Noel Gould, have the resources to turn Sea Breeze into an obstacle for Buscaino’s reelection.

Arnold, who also faults Buscaino’s approach to homelessness and environmental justice, is optimistic that social media can make up for his lack of campaign funding.



“I don’t think money is going to be as big in politics at the local level as it used to be,” Arnold said.

While in office, Buscaino has avoided an issue that has dogged others who have represented the 15th District: being accused of focusing on San Pedro at the expense of the rest of the district.

In Watts, Buscaino has vocally advocated for the makeover of Jordan Downs, a dilapidated World War II-era public housing project. Though he is viewed in some City Hall quarters as a puppet of Garcetti, Buscaino called out the mayor in 2015 for an error that resulted in the project not qualifying for federal housing money.

Perry Crouch, a gang interventionist whose family moved to Watts shortly before the riots in 1965, said many council members who represented the area ignored the neighborhood.

“Joe’s been working hand in hand with us,” Crouch said.

One of Buscaino’s most vocal critics is James Preston Allen, publisher of San Pedro’s Random Lengths News. He described the incumbent’s record as “mediocre.”

Allen said Buscaino is a self-promoter who has failed to adequately address the area’s homelessness. He also called the councilman’s beliefs about waterfront development “delusions.”

Still, Allen does not believe that Buscaino, who won his 2013 election with 83% of the vote, can be stopped.

“He is vulnerable,” Allen said. “The question is whether there is anybody currently signed up to run against him that can convince the rest of the community that he should go.”

[seema.mehta@latimes.com](mailto:seema.mehta@latimes.com)

**Twitter:** [@LATSeema](https://twitter.com/LATSeema)