

CALIFORNIA

San Pedro residents fight plans to put an addiction recovery center in their neighborhood



Michelle Genest demonstrates Sunday in San Pedro against a proposed addiction recovery center that protestors say would be too close to a church with a daycare and multiple schools. (Carlin Stiehl / For The Times)



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- Fred Brown’s Recovery Services wants to acquire a five-acre property in San Pedro for a 122-bed inpatient recovery facility

and has promised to engage the community on any concerns.

- Residents don't object to sobriety treatment but say the proposed location is too close to schools and other sensitive locations.
- The property previously was owned by Little Sisters of the Poor, who operated a home for the elderly on the site.

More than 200 people who live near a proposed addiction recovery center in San Pedro protested at the site Sunday afternoon, arguing the facility — which would share property with or displace a nursing home — is a bad fit for the neighborhood.

Some residents are hopeful that a Tuesday evening town hall meeting will shed more light on the project, which they say was unexpected.

The nonprofit Fred Brown's Recovery Services is seeking to acquire the five-acre property at 2100 Western Avenue and turn it into a 122-bed inpatient recovery facility that would serve "veterans, the justice-involved, the unhoused, and those with co-occurring conditions," Fred Brown's said in a two-page information notice sent to area residents. The facility also would serve about 1,000 people on an outpatient basis.

because this is a community that helps each other,” she said.

Others said San Pedro has several alternative residential treatment facilities but almost no other low-cost senior care homes. “San Pedro has done enough,” Maryanne Pesic, 72, said. “We need this like we need a hole in the head.”

In a statement to The Times, Fred Brown’s said it appreciated “the community’s engagement on this important matter and respect its right to express its views. We are committed to ensuring this is a respectful, transparent conversation grounded in accurate information, and we look forward to continued dialogue.”

While the dispute is centered in one neighborhood, similar battles are likely to play out elsewhere as nonprofit groups seek to expand services to treat mental health issues, addiction and homelessness.



The five-acre property on Western Avenue, which houses a retirement home formerly called Serenity Senior Village, previously was home to a nursing home run by the nuns of the Little Sisters of the Poor. The property has changed hands twice in the last five years. (Carlin Stiehl / For The Times)

Underlying the conflict between neighbors and treatment centers is a widening gap between supply and demand in all kinds of housing, UCLA public health professor [Randall Kuhn](#) said in an interview.

“Every community needs to accept facilities at some point, but on the other hand, we’re a democracy,” he said. Neither the city nor the county has agreed upon or given communities like San Pedro a reasonable expectation for addressing the crisis, Kuhn said.

The project is still in its earliest phases but has been preapproved for more than \$73 million in grant funding under California’s [Proposition 1](#), a \$6.4-billion bond measure approved by voters in 2024 to improve mental health and addiction treatment, [state records show](#). Fred Brown’s said in its statement to The Times that the project budget and other costs are subject to change.

The land was owned for decades by the Little Sisters of the Poor, a group of Roman Catholic nuns providing elder care. The nuns withdrew from the property in 2024, according to their [website](#).

Richard Scandalato, president of San Pedro’s South Shores Community Assn., said the property is close to a church with a daycare and multiple schools.

Residents don’t object to sobriety treatment, he said, but don’t think it should be in this location.

“What are you bringing to the community?” he asked.

State Sen. Suzette Martinez Valladares (R-Acton) introduced [a bill](#) that would bar drug and alcohol treatment facilities from being too close to daycare centers and schools, but

the legislation has yet to be debated.

City Councilman Tim McOsker, who represents San Pedro and attended the protest, scheduled a community meeting on the project for Tuesday night. McOsker said he is concerned that Fred Brown's never has attempted a large-scale treatment center like the one it has proposed on Western Avenue.



A banner expresses local residents' concerns about placing a large addiction treatment facility in the neighborhood. (Carlin Stiehl / For The Times)

“It is a growth that would overwhelm this organization, and there’s no proof that they have the capacity to do it,” he said in an interview.

McOsker also is concerned about some 70 elderly residents at a nursing home on the property, Ocean View Living, who could be removed from the property or find themselves new neighbors to rehabilitation residents.

Doug Epperhart, president of the Coastal San Pedro Neighborhood Council, said his group is waiting to weigh in until more information on the project is released. But he said he isn't surprised by the concerns.

“It is a community that jealously guards its way of life,” he said.

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