

Town hall on Fred Brown proposal draws hundreds in San Pedro



A woman holds an information pamphlet provided by Fred Brown’s Recovery Services during a town hall meeting in San Pedro on Tuesday, April 14, 2026. (Photo by Raphael Richardson, Contributing Photographer)



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The proposal by Fred Brown Recovery Services Inc. has especially galvanized the South Shores community of San Pedro, with many saying it will lead to more crime, is too close to schools and will affect property values in San Pedro's most attractive ocean-side neighborhoods. Opponents organized a sidewalk demonstration — which drew about 300 — in front of the building at the center of the controversy, 2100 S. Western Ave., two days earlier.

McOsker's town hall meeting included presentations by Fred Brown and set aside the rest of the evening to take open public comment. Those attending were given written surveys to fill out and hand back to the council office, asking if the signer supported or opposed the proposal or was neutral.

On Wednesday, McOsker said he remains opposed to the project, which developed as a result of a proposition approved by California voters in 2024 that provides \$6.4 billion in bonds to finance behavioral health treatment.

"This is such a large project for a small nonprofit to take on," he said in a follow-up telephone interview. "It seems beyond their ability."

He also said he is concerned that some 70 people now in the facility's elderly and memory care center at Little Sisters — which has closed, though another owner is in place — would be displaced should the plans go through.

McOsker has provided a list of state agencies and officials for residents to contact to express concerns.

The measure, as written, bypasses many of the steps required by Los Angeles for such projects that give local communities more information about potential impacts, McOsker said.

"It's understandable that folks are frustrated," McOsker said. "There's been so little information on this project."

Some portions of the Fred Brown presentation during the town hall indicated the plans would proceed, drawing shouts such as "Never!" from the audience.

Roxanna Natale-Brown, the widow of founder Fred Brown, said the program provides a chance to bring more people in off the streets. The recovery program's co-founder, Al Ahl, treated former first lady Betty Ford in 1973, according to information provided by the group.

The recovery program has operated several small homes in San Pedro for a couple of decades and the group is a member of the San Pedro Chamber of Commerce.

But little had been shared publicly about the new plan to acquire the Little Sisters buildings over the past several months.

Fred Brown Recovery already has received a tentative award from the state and has received a check list to complete before receiving funds that would be used to purchase the Little Sisters of the Poor property.

If final funding is received, the group's literature said, project completion would be required by June 2031.

Fred Brown speakers said there is currently a shortfall of beds in the South Bay and surrounding areas for those looking to recover from drug or alcohol addictions.

Full capacity of the future center, proponents said, would be 175 to 200 and no new construction is planned. The location, said Mark Malone, director of administration for Fred Brown, offers the recommended "campus model" with three or more buildings on a single property.

It will be a licensed and monitored environment, with no "free roaming" into the community, staff members said; random drug and alcohol testing will be part of the routine.

Visitors will also be supervised and screened, staff members said.

Many speakers mentioned a temporary drug-and-alcohol residential program, not connected to Fred Brown, that was in the building temporarily a few months ago and caused problems in the neighborhood. One speaker, a retired Los Angeles Police Department captain, said more study needs to be done on potential neighborhood impacts, noting that police staffing is down.

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