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By [BROOKE SELF](#)[Print Page](#)

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For-profit prison group drops plans for third jail in Adelanto

ADELANTO — Geo Group Inc., a global for-profit prison operator, has decided to vacate plans to construct a 1,050-bed facility in the city, officials said Wednesday.

The Adelanto City Council was expected to vote to accept Geo Group's request to drop its plans at a City Council meeting on Wednesday.

While several Geo employees turned out to the Nov. 19 council meeting to show support for the project, other community members voiced concern about the location's proximity to the Adelanto Residential Airpark and Adelanto High School.

The new facility was expected to be constructed at the northeast corner of Holly and Koala roads. The Adelanto Planning Commission also voted 4-0 on Nov. 4 to deny a renewal of the company's conditional use permit and development agreement. Commissioners were concerned with prisoners being released directly outside the facility.

"I'm really happy to hear that they're withdrawing their application," said Mario Novoa, an Adelanto resident and filmmaker.

Novoa organized a community town hall meeting on Wednesday before the council meeting to discuss the expansion of prisons in the city, including the recent approval of a 3,264-bed jail that would house overflow inmates from Los Angeles County.

"I did read in (Geo's) letter from their attorney that they were reserving the right to proceed in the future if they wanted to," Novoa said. "So it's still on the table. I think when it comes to government that's where residents can get overwhelmed. We have to look through all the legalese. And we elect people to do that as leaders but we also have to investigate and look further and not just at the talking points."

A letter dated Jan. 15 from attorney Donovan Collier representing Geo Group Inc. states that the company "reserves its right to resubmit this request in the future."

Geo operates the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement facility in Adelanto that is expanding by 640 beds to house a total of 1,940 inmates. The company also operates Desert View Modified Community Correctional, which houses inmates and parole violators for the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.

A message sent to Geo Group Inc. regarding the withdrawal was not immediately returned. Adelanto City Manager Jim Hart said in an email that he was not certain why the company withdrew their application but that they have "contributed time, money and other resources in support of city and community activities."

"Unfortunately they let the permits for this project expire and that is why they were processing again," Hart said. "The facility had been originally approved in 2006 but they did not have a tenant, so no facility was built."

At the Nov. 19 City Council meeting, Geo Group Inc. CEO George Zoley presented his plan to the council for renewal and said the company still did not have an agreed upon tenant. But he said they were having discussions.

Campaign organizers of Defund Detention in Adelanto, Victoria Mena and Christina Fialho, said on Wednesday that they were both happy to hear the news.

"We are glad that Geo Group has heard the residents of Adelanto and withdrawn its application, but there is more work for the community to do," Fialho said. "Geo Group is still planning to expand the immigration detention facility in Adelanto by 640 beds. The truth is that for-profit incarceration has no place in a democratic society and should have no place in Adelanto."

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