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Fewer Mecklenburg inmates put new jail in question

The Associated Press

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The number of inmates at the Mecklenburg County Jail has dropped so much that plans for a larger detention center are being reconsidered.

The Charlotte Observer reported Tuesday that lower inmate populations have prompted county commissioners to consider setting aside plans to build a \$240 million, 1,700-bed permanent jail in north Charlotte.

The new jail was planned as the county's inmate population peaked at 2,900 inmates in 2007. Space had become so tight that hundreds of inmates slept on cots.

Existing jail facilities have 2,700 beds. Mecklenburg was housing fewer than 2,000 inmates last week.

Officials say lower crime rates and justice system reforms have led the drop in the number of inmates.

Information from: The Charlotte Observer, <http://www.charlotteobserver.com>

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