



# GROWING PAINS

BY EVAN WILLIAMS

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“The Duany Plan” for downtown Fort Myers is taking shape but some say at a hefty price

**I**n late November of 2001, the city of Fort Myers — defined at that moment as more than 1,500 government leaders, stakeholders and residents — conducted a 10-day “charrette.”

The brainstorming rendezvous had a big-tent goal as fervently conceived as any born-again convert’s: to inject downtown with a vitality seemingly lost, and to call it not an entertainment district — the wilted label of the previous decade — but more precisely and poetically, “The River District.”

**Inside:**  
Q&A with new urbanist city-planner and architect Andres Duany ...  
**A9**

New urbanist city-planner and architect Andres Duany and his Miami-based firm, Duany Plater-Zyberk & Company, led the charrette, adding months of analysis before and after (their bill for services: \$270,000). Together with Duany, the city produced a document called “Downtown Fort Myers.”

SEE GROWING, A8 ▶

FLORIDA WEEKLY PHOTO

## State to reform juvenile justice system

But leaves Southwest Florida off the 25-member committee

BY JEFF CULL

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Florida announced a plan last week to reform the juvenile justice system that was rocked by the death of a 14-year-old boy in a juvenile boot camp in 2006.

That was good news to local experts in teen crime but left some Southwest Florida advocates cold.

The 25 members appointed by Secretary Walter McNeil to a “Blueprint Com-

mission” represent every area of the state except Southwest Florida.

And that’s just the latest in a long line of rebuffs to local juvenile justice efforts.

Frank Busbee, a chief probation officer for the Department of Juvenile Justice in Fort Myers said that Southwest Florida gets the least amount of money, per capita, for substance abuse and mental health for kids.

Carol Helton, a member of the Lee County Juvenile Justice Council, said our area isn’t represented on the State Advisory Group that awards federal grants to combat juvenile crime and “hasn’t had a representative for awhile.”

She said Collier County juvenile advocates are asking legislators for a bill requiring all areas of the state be represented.

Overall, Southwest Florida gets little state help battling the rising juvenile crime problem.

That was a hot topic in last Thursday’s Lee County Juvenile Justice Council meeting where members questioned the state for leaving Southwest Florida out of the juvenile justice loop.

Some even questioned the expertise of some members McNeil selected to the “Blueprint Commission,” which includes a bank president, a regional president of

SEE JUSTICE, A10 ▶



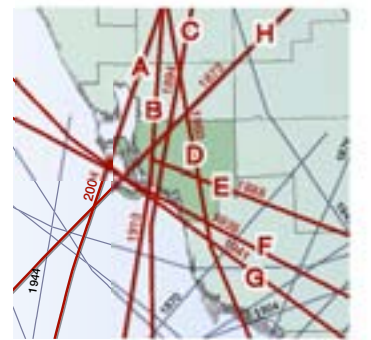
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at the Center for the Arts in Bonita Springs. **C1** ▶



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Forecasters lower storm predictions but beware: August through October are still the worst for Lee County. **A21** ▶



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