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## **The Smart Growth America Local Leaders Council**

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I was pleased to have been asked recently to serve as a member of the advisory board of the Smart Growth America Local Leaders Council, a non-partisan group of local elected officials who are committed to building and strengthening communities throughout the country. Our first Strategy Summit was held several weeks ago in Washington, D.C.

The Local Leaders Council is a new national network of local elected leaders, representing a diverse array of communities, who are committed to using "smart growth" techniques within their communities to help them compete and thrive in the current economy, create vibrant spaces in which to live and work and provide good transportation and housing choices for their citizens.

Responsibilities of the council's advisory board's two dozen members include traveling regionally and nationally to share their communities' stories, helping shape activities and direction of the new Local Leaders Council, convening for the annual strategy summit, and advising and assisting communities that want to emulate successful programs and share best practices. We also gain access to policy development and implementation assistance, along with other benefits. Oklahoma City Mayor Mick Cornett and Cincinnati Mayor Mark Mallory are board co-chairmen.

I firmly believe that smart growth practices are critical components to ensuring and preserving a good quality of life within a community, which is why, throughout my tenure as mayor, affordable housing, brownfields remediation, creation and improvement of parks, protection of open space, public health initiatives and making neighborhoods more pedestrian friendly have been priorities. Our commitment to these principles earned our Warwick Station Development District and Master Plan, a 2012 Outstanding Smart Growth Plan Award.

Smart Growth America is the only national organization dedicated to researching, advocating for, and leading coalitions to bring smart growth practices to more communities nationwide. To learn more, visit [www.smartgrowthamerica.org](http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org).

Scott Avedisian is the mayor of Warwick and the chairman of the RIPTA board of directors.

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