

# 2009

## New Partners for Smart Growth Lifetime Achievement Award

**Parris N. Glendening, former Governor of Maryland; President,  
Smart Growth Leadership Institute, Smart Growth America**

**P**arris Glendening's name is so synonymous with the words "smart growth" that many people believe he must have coined the phrase. While he may not have been the first person to put those two words together, he has done as much as anyone in the country to popularize not only the phrase but many of the concepts behind smart growth.

As Maryland's 59th governor, Glendening thrust the issue of smart growth into the national consciousness with the 1997 enactment of his Smart Growth and Neighborhood Conservation program, the first statewide, incentive-based growth management initiative in the nation. Throughout the remainder of his two terms in office and continuing into his current role as president of the Smart Growth Leadership Institute (a project of Smart Growth America), Glendening has left a permanent imprint on the land use and environmental policies of his home state and his nation.

Glendening's public career began at the municipal level, moved to the county level, and concluded at the gubernatorial level. During that long career in elected office, he strongly advocated for smarter development balanced with land conservation and environmental protection. Under his leadership, Maryland revised its building rehabilitation code, created novel new revitalization programs, invested in transit and access to transit stations, promoted walking, supported the revitalization of historic theatres and other architecturally significant buildings, and required that state offices be located in downtown areas.

His administration inventoried and mapped all of the ecologically significant lands in Maryland and created – and funded – a variety of land preservation programs. During his eight years in office, an array of state and local land preservation programs were employed together to save more than 285,000 acres or nearly 4 percent of the land mass of Maryland. That nearly matched the 325,000 acres that had been protected by all of the governors together who preceded him from 1970 to the present.

While Governor, Glendening was elected by his peers to serve as chairman of the National Governor's Association, a position he used to put "quality growth" on the agenda of all the nation's governors. He has continued to work directly with governors as head of the Governors' Institute on Community Design, a joint project of the U.S. EPA and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Glendening's interest in growth issues started when, as a college student in Florida, he sensed that something was wrong as he watched sprawl steadily advance toward the Everglades. He went on to receive bachelor's, master's and doctorate degrees from Florida State University, all in political science. Following graduation, he taught political science for 27 years at the University of Maryland. He was elected to statewide office after serving on the Hyattsville city council and three terms as county executive of Prince George's County, a jurisdiction of 800,000 outside Washington, DC.

He has received both the American Society of Landscape Architects' Olmsted Award and Harvard University's Innovations in American Government Award for his dedication to preserving open space, containing sprawl, and revitalizing Maryland's communities. He also was twice named "Public Official of the Year" by *Governing Magazine*, the first time as county executive and the second as governor due to the impact of his nationally recognized smart growth program.

**“We have the ability to make things better. The answer largely depends on how well governments manage growth, how well we use existing infrastructure, how well we conserve and reinvigorate our existing neighborhoods, and how often we stretch our imaginations and use our creativity...”**

– Parris Glendening



photo: Baltimore Sun