

Faith-Based Property Ownership in Virginia



Quantifying potential impact of
statewide “Faith in Housing”
legislation

Research conducted by



HousingForward
VIRGINIA



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About

“Faith-Based Property Ownership in Virginia” is a report commissioned by the Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy.

[Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy \(VICPP\)](#) is a non-partisan coalition of 25,000 members, which includes 750 houses of worship, 1,000 clergy of all faiths, and people of goodwill, ten chapters (and growing!), many partner and affiliate organizations, most of the judicatory leaders in the state, and activists in every House and Senate district in Virginia, all working for a more just society.

[HousingForward Virginia](#) is a non-partisan, non-profit research and policy organization focused on housing in the Commonwealth of Virginia. HousingForward Virginia helps community leaders take action to solve their housing challenges. As a trusted partner and innovator, we use evidence-based solutions to build a future where everyone has a safe, stable home they can afford.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Goal

The goal of this investigation is to estimate the number and characteristics of properties owned by faith-based organizations in Virginia. The findings will help inform policy related to the development of affordable housing on these parcels.

1.2 Background

[Senate Bill 233](#), which aimed to grant religious organizations certain powers to overcome local zoning barriers for affordable housing development on their own land, was continued in committee by the Virginia Senate during the 2024 General Assembly Session.

In response, a coalition led by the Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy has formed to explore future legislative strategies. This research project will provide essential data on the scope and scale of faith-based property ownership across Virginia to guide and substantiate new policy proposals.

1.3 Research

The primary objectives of this research are to identify and examine properties owned by faith-based organizations in Virginia, determining:

- Total number and acreage of parcels
- Number of parcels by region
- Proportion of undeveloped vs. actively used properties
- Development potential based on current zoning (for a representative sample of properties)

2 Methodology

This chapter outlines the data sources and applied methods used in this analysis, along with important discussion regarding the interpretation of results.

2.1 Data sources

2.1.1 Regrid parcel dataset

LOVELAND Technologies' Regrid dataset for Virginia provides the most comprehensive source to investigate properties based on ownership. This dataset has several fields of interest that can help determine the ownership and use of a property. While not all jurisdictions in Virginia have full data field coverage in Regrid, there is no comparable data source.

In Virginia, there are over 4 million individual parcels. Working with such a large dataset required an investigation of available fields in the Regrid dataset and keywords that would help identify faith-based organizations.

[Regrid Land Parcel Data](https://regrid.com) (regrid.com)

2.1.2 Federal "All Places of Worship" dataset

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Homeland Infrastructure Foundation-Level Data (HIFLD) program includes an "All Places of Worship" dataset of point features for churches, temples, mosques, and similar religious properties. The source used for this data is the IRS master file containing all 501(c)3 organizations in the United States.

[All Places of Worship \(IRS 2024\)](https://data.gov) (data.gov)

[Exempt Organizations Business Master File Extract](https://irs.gov) (irs.gov)

2.1.3 Virginia State Corporation Commission

To aid in the confirmation of faith-based organizations, data from the Virginia State Corporation Commission (SCC) was used to retain entries of confirmed religious

organizations. The SCC is responsible for granting corporate charters to religious organizations in Virginia, which are considered non-stock corporations.

2.2 Methods

2.2.1 Property keywords

To identify faith-based organizations, HFV employed an extensive series of filtering and key word search to retain parcels likely owned by a faith-based organization, while removing properties that were definitively not a place of worship or a property owned by a likely faith-based organization.

A keyword list was developed based on an investigation of the “All Places of Worship” dataset for Virginia. Utilizing the R programming language, we identified words that appeared 30 or more times among names of places of worship in Virginia. This list of 91 terms was reviewed internally by HFV staff and terms that could result in false positives were removed. This list was shared with Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy to review and suggest additions or changes.

Table 2.1: List of keywords used for parcel identification

adventist	agape	anglican	antioch	apostolic	assemblies	assembly
bahais	baptist	bethel	bethlehem	bible	buddhist	calvary
cathedral	catholic	chapel	christ	christian	chruch	church
cielo	congregation	coptic	covenant	cristiano	cristo	deliverance
diocese	dios	disciples	ebenezer	emanuel	emmanuel	episcopal
evagelical	evangelica	evangelistic	faith	fellowship	god	gospel
grace	heaven	holiness	holy	hope	iglesia	imanuel
islamic	israel	jesus	kingdom	korean	lord	lutheran
mennonite	mercy	methodist	miniesterio	ministries	ministry	mision
missionary	mount	muslim	nazarene	orthodox	outreach	peace
pentecostal	prayer	presbyterian	prophecy	redeem	reformation	religious
resurrection	revival	saint	saints	shalom	spirit	spiritual
tabernacle	temple	trinity	unity	universalist	worship	zion

2.2.2 Parcel identification process

To reduce the over 4 million individual parcels to a manageable size, HFV utilized the Land Based Classification Standards Activity code provided in the Regrid dataset to remove parcels that were known to be used for activities unrelated to places of worship or unknown activities.

In addition, the Regrid dataset utilizes United States Postal Service data to determine whether a property is a residential address. This field is known as the Residential Delivery (RDI). Entries wherein RDI was identified as “N” for not a residential delivery address or where the value was NA were retained.

This helped to reduce the dataset from 4 million entries to just over 800,000.

Utilizing the word list, we detected all instances where a term was present in the owner name field. These entries were retained and resulted in a reduction in entries from over 800,000 to 25,121. The Use Description (usedesc) field of the dataset was used to identify known properties denoted as a faith-based property. A column was created to denote whether a property was a confirmed religious use and another column was created to denote whether the use was a cemetery.

Entries that were a confirmed religious use were retained in a separate dataframe and the remaining entries were analyzed. Cemetery properties were removed from the dataframe because the likelihood of cemetery properties being redeveloped for housing is low.

Following this was a series of retaining and eliminating entries based on keywords. This involved multiple manual reviews of the data to identify common terms that could lead to the retention or elimination of entries that were false positives.

For example, a review would lead to the identification of several instances of “Mocha Temple”. The Mocha Shriners are a fraternal order and not a faith-based organization, but they often refer to their properties as temples. Therefore, “Mocha” was used as a word to eliminate entries from the dataframe.

In contrast, there were several words that were always associated with a faith-based property. These words or phrases were used to retain entries. For example, the terms “Lutheran” and “Presbyterian” were always associated with a faith-based organization. A list of organizations found in the SCC data was matched to the dataframe based on entity names.

2.2.3 Preliminary selections

The series of data retention and elimination led to two dataframes:

1. A dataframe of 22,387 entries where the likelihood of ownership by a faith-based organization was confirmed or high, and
2. A dataframe of 1,318 unconfirmed entries.

The unconfirmed dataframe was manually reviewed by HFV and entries that were not a faith-based organization were removed. This includes individuals wherein their name resulted in a false positive (e.g., their name contained the word “Lord,” “Christian,” or “Church”). Other entries that were removed were companies or other entities that were more than likely not a faith-based organization. This manual review resulted in the reduction of the unconfirmed dataframe to 415 entries.

The resulting dataframes were combined leading to a total of 22,802 entries.

2.2.4 Final review

An additional review of the data identified the continued presence of certain terms and other organizations not previously removed. This included schools, academies, media companies, and cemeteries. These entries were removed and resulted in a total of 22,466 entries. Instances of duplicate parcels existed and were identified using Regrid’s “ll_uuid” field, which uniquely identifies a single parcel. This further reduced the total number of entries to 22,453.

The resulting data were then combined with geospatial data in QGIS to calculate the acreage for all parcels. While LOVELAND Technologies provides this data as a field, their coverage was not complete for all jurisdictions. This dataset was used in the ensuing analysis.

2.3 Data accuracy

The final dataset represents an *estimation* of faith-based property ownership in Virginia. The exact count of faith-based properties in Virginia could be higher or lower than the final count in this report. However, the results of this report represent the most comprehensive statewide investigation to date.

2.3.1 Confidence levels

Confidence levels are created to quantify the reliability and accuracy of statistical estimates or predictions. In the context of classifying properties as faith-based organizations, confidence levels serve several crucial purposes:

- **Measure of Certainty:** They provide a numerical representation of how certain we are about the accuracy of our classification method.
- **Quality Assurance:** They help in assessing the reliability of the data and the classification process.
- **Decision Support:** They aid in making informed decisions based on the level of confidence in the results.
- **Transparency:** They offer a clear way to communicate the reliability of the findings to stakeholders.
- **Improvement Guidance:** They highlight areas where the classification method might need refinement.

The process of creating confidence levels for the faith-based property classification involved several key steps:

1. **Sampling:** From the total 22,453 properties classified, a random sample of 378 was selected. This sample size was determined to achieve a 95% confidence level with a 5% margin of error.
2. **Verification:** Each property in the sample was manually verified to determine if it was correctly classified as faith-based.
3. **Accuracy Calculation:** The proportion of correctly classified properties in the sample was calculated, providing an estimate of the overall accuracy.
4. **Confidence Interval Calculation:** Using the sample results, a 95% confidence interval for the true accuracy was computed. This interval provides a range within which we can be 95% confident the true accuracy lies.
5. **Confidence Level Assignment:** Based on the calculated accuracy, a confidence level was assigned using predefined criteria:
 - 95-100% accuracy: Very High Confidence

- 90-94% accuracy: High Confidence
 - 80-89% accuracy: Moderate Confidence
 - 70-79% accuracy: Low Confidence Below
 - 70% accuracy: Very Low Confidence
6. Statistical Analysis: The binomial test was used to calculate the confidence interval, accounting for the sample size and observed accuracy.
 7. Interpretation: The results were interpreted to understand the implications of the confidence interval and assigned confidence level.

This process allows for a nuanced understanding of the classification accuracy. For instance, if the sample showed 92% accuracy with a confidence interval of [88.89%, 94.50%], we can say with 95% confidence that the true accuracy of the classification method lies between 88.89% and 94.50%. This would be assigned a “High Confidence” level.

2.3.2 Interpretation

The creation of these confidence levels provides a robust framework for assessing the reliability of the property classification. It acknowledges that while the method may not be perfect, we can quantify its accuracy and express our certainty about the results. This approach balances the need for practical usability of the data with a clear understanding of its limitations, enabling more informed decision-making and targeted improvements to the classification method if needed.

Based on a random sample of 378 entries, 100% of entries sampled were a faith-based organization. Using the Wilson score interval method, which is more appropriate than the normal approximation when proportions are very high or low, the lower bound confidence interval is 99.03% and the upper bound is 100%. Therefore, we can be 95% confident that the true accuracy of the entire dataset lies between 99.03% and 100%.

This result is statistically significant, indicating that the high accuracy is very unlikely to be due to chance. However, there is a high chance that the data set may be missing faith-based owned parcels that were not captured using the keywords. Additional analysis and cross-referencing for a sample of jurisdictions could enhance the data in the future.

2.4 Virginia Zoning Atlas

The Virginia Zoning Atlas is a project of HousingForward Virginia that seeks to analyze and map all of the zoning districts in Virginia. The purpose of the Virginia Zoning Atlas is to understand how much developable land in Virginia allows or does not allow for diverse types of housing. To date, HFV has completed three regions based on regional planning district commissions.

The atlas offers opportunities to apply data collected on zoning to other areas of interest, including development viability based on zoning. With the zoning atlas, we will be able to determine what type of housing can be built on faith-based owned properties and conduct additional analysis.

By-right zoning for residential development on faith-based owned properties reduces a significant barrier to residential development. But requiring faith-based organizations to go through a public hearing process in order to develop housing can increase costs or lead to project-ending opposition from existing residents.

Utilizing the Northern Virginia region as a case study, HFV examined the zoning of faith-based owned properties within the footprint of the Northern Virginia Regional Commission (NVRC). The Northern Virginia region's zoning atlas was completed by the Mercatus Center at George Mason University in collaboration with HousingForward Virginia and the Urban Institute.

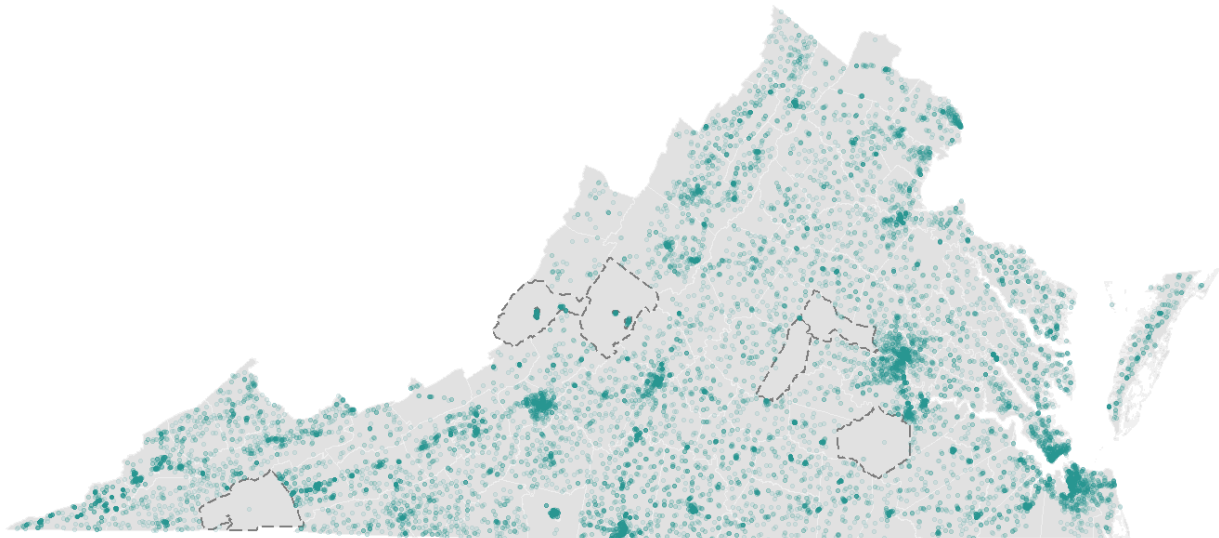
3 Summary

Out of the over 4 million parcels in Virginia, 22,453 were identified as likely owned by a faith-based organization — with a 95% confidence level that the true accuracy of the entire dataset lies between 99.03% and 100%.

Figure 3.1: Parcels in Virginia owned by faith-based organizations

Parcels in Virginia owned by faith-based organizations

Limited data coverage in outlined counties



These findings were based on a keyword search with a process of retention and elimination based on known faith-based and secular entities. Some faith-based properties could be absent from the analysis due to terms or phrases not accounted for.

However, the results likely represent a significant, if not an overwhelming majority, of parcels owned by faith-based organizations in the Commonwealth of Virginia. In total, these parcels amount to 74,116 acres of land.

How large is 74,116 acres?

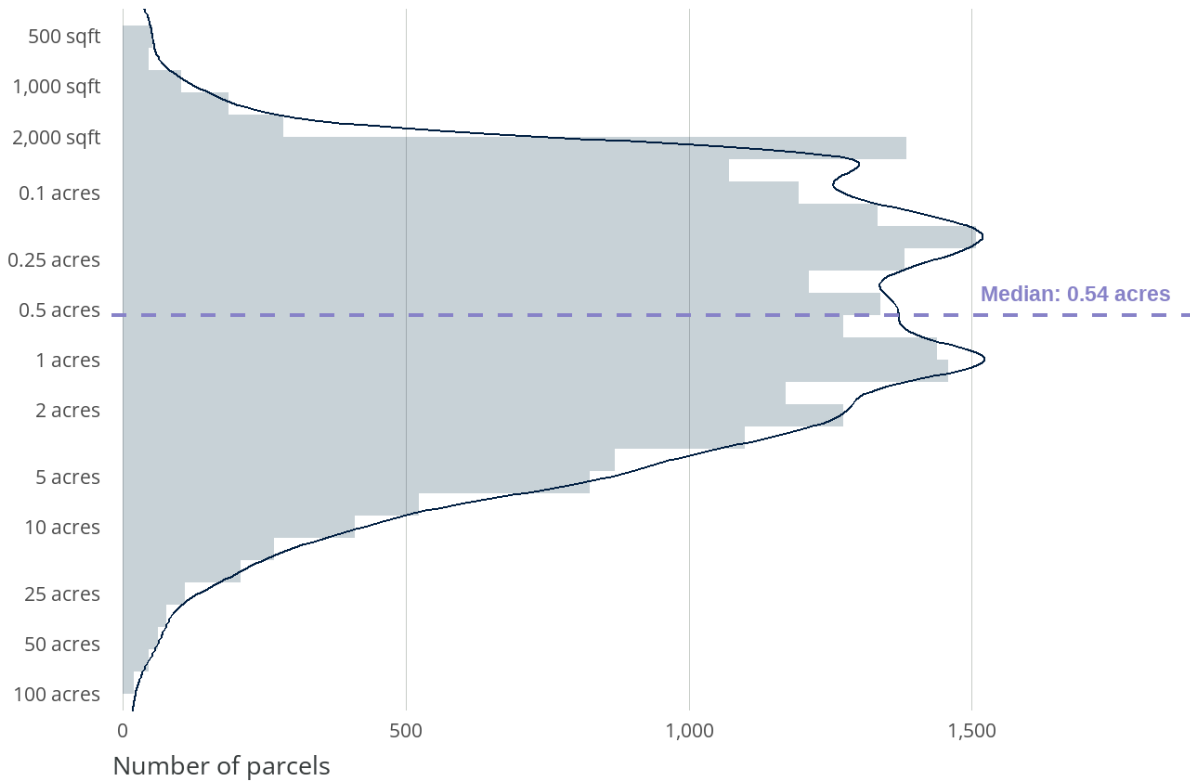
To put this into context, the City of Richmond is roughly 40,000 acres, meaning the identified parcels amount to nearly *twice the size* of Richmond.

A histogram of the lot sizes of the 22,453 parcels shows that an overwhelming majority of these parcels are more than 0.1 acres (approximately 4,350 square feet).

Figure 3.2: Distribution of lot sizes

Distribution of lot sizes

Small lots shown in square feet, larger lots in acres



SB 822 or any similar legislation would encourage multifamily development whose lot size requirements depend on a variety of factors. The bill introduced in 2024 allowed for a density of 40 units per acre and a height of one story *or* 15 feet above the maximum allowable height for residential use according to the locality's current zoning.

The median lot size is 23,509 square feet, which is approximately 0.54 acres. In many circumstances, this lot size is only viable for a small multifamily building of fewer than 20 units, particularly in urban areas served by public water and sewer.

However, there are still significant shares of these parcels that could theoretically support larger residential development projects. About 38% are larger than 1 acre, and 25% are larger than 2 acres.

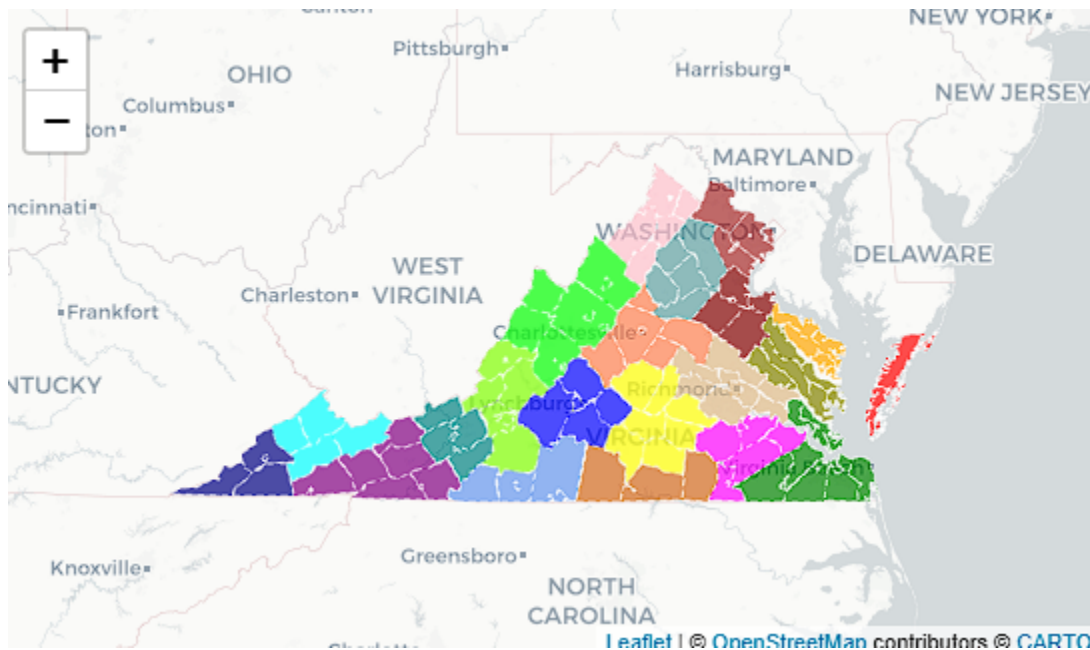
Table 3.1: Share of parcels by lot size

Lot size	Percent
More than 0.25 acres	64%
More than 0.5 acres	51%
More than 1 acre	38%
More than 2 acres	25%
More than 5 acres	11%

4 Regions

To investigate geographic patterns further, HFV utilized Virginia's 21 planning district commissions (PDCs) to assign parcels to a geographic region. This is helpful because not all jurisdictions in Virginia are part of a metropolitan or micropolitan statistical area, whereas all jurisdictions are represented by at least one of the 21 PDCs. In addition, PDC boundaries represent an area wherein there are distinct socioeconomic patterns.

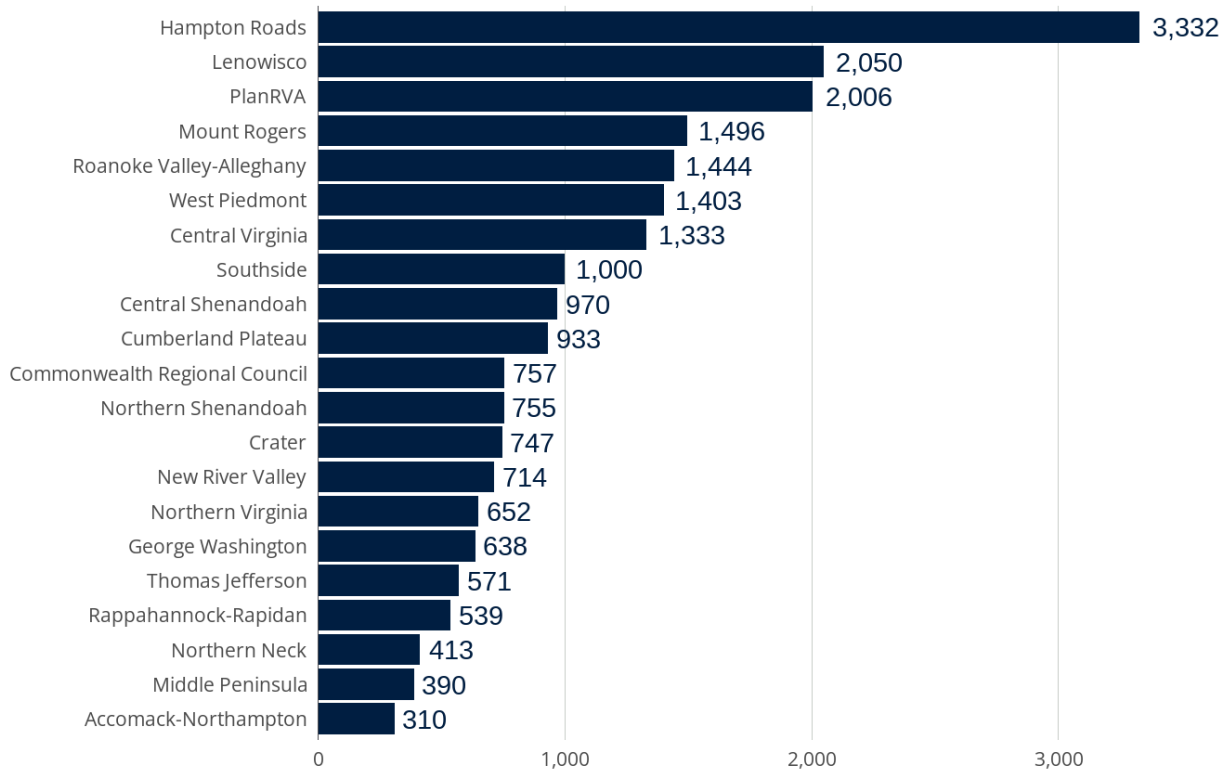
Figure 4.1: Map of Virginia PDCs



The Hampton Roads region exceeds its peers in the number of parcels owned by faith-based organizations at 3,332. The LENOWISCO and PlanRVA regions follow at just over 1,000 fewer parcels - 2,050 and 2,006, respectively.

Figure 4.2: Total number of faith-based owned parcels by PDC

Total number of faith-based owned parcels by PDC

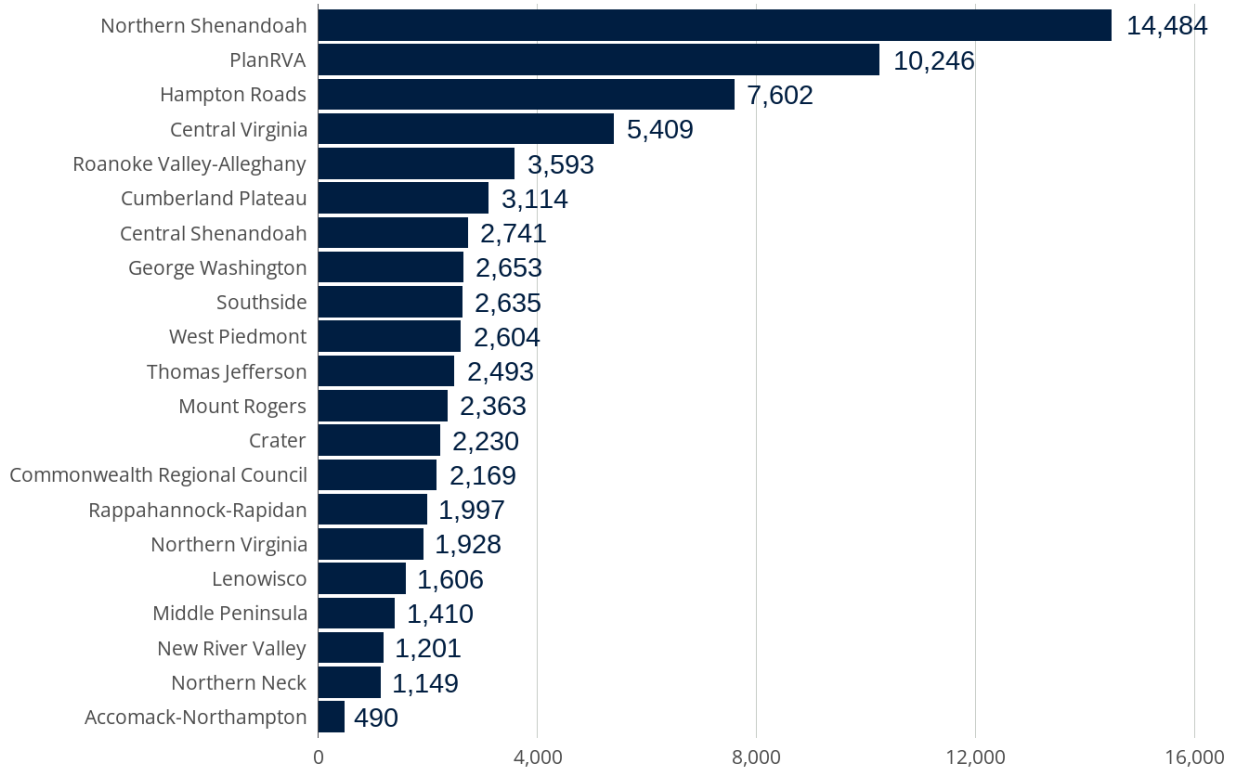


Source: HousingForward Virginia & LOVELAND Technologies, Regrid 2024 Dataset.

These rankings change when we look specifically at acreage. The Northern Shenandoah Valley region rises to the top of list at just over 14,000 acres of land owned by faith-based organizations, while the PlanRVA region follows at 10,246. Hampton Roads still stays in the top three, but comes in at 7,602 acres. The LENOWISCO region falls down the list to the 17th region with the most acreage at only 1,606 acres. While the LENOWISCO region contains significantly more parcels than several of its peers, those parcels are undoubtedly smaller in area.

Figure 4.3: Total acres of faith-based owned land by PDC

Total acres of faith-based owned land by PDC



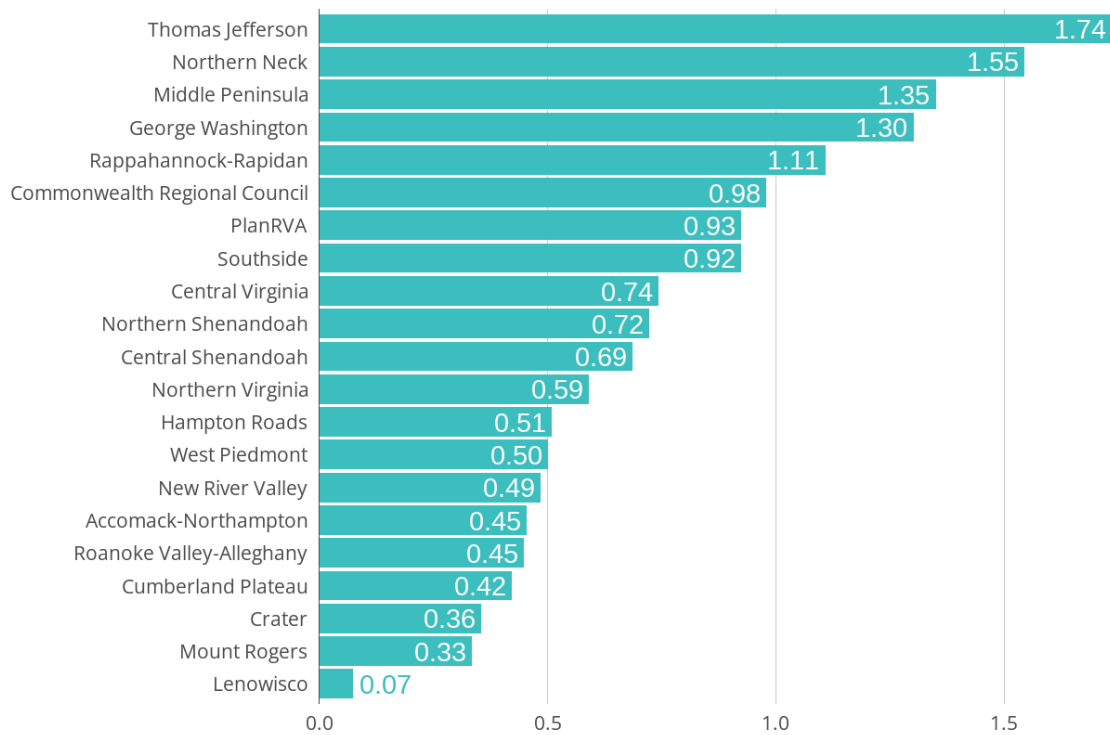
Source: HousingForward Virginia & LOVELAND Technologies, Regrid 2024 Dataset.

Exploring individual parcel size gives a better understanding of opportunities for viable residential development. To do this, we explore the median parcel size rather than the average in order to account for outliers that may skew the results. By looking at the median parcel size, the rankings change once again. The Thomas Jefferson region has the largest parcels with a median size of 1.74 acres - just under the size of a FIFA standard soccer field (1.76 acres). The Northern Neck follows at 1.55 acres and the next six regions sit between 1.3 and 0.92 acres. The remaining regions have a median parcel size below 0.75 acres - with the LENOWISCO region having the smallest median parcel size at under 0.10 acres.

Figure 4.4: Median size of faith-owned parcels by PDC

Median size of faith-owned parcels by PDC

Parcel size in acres



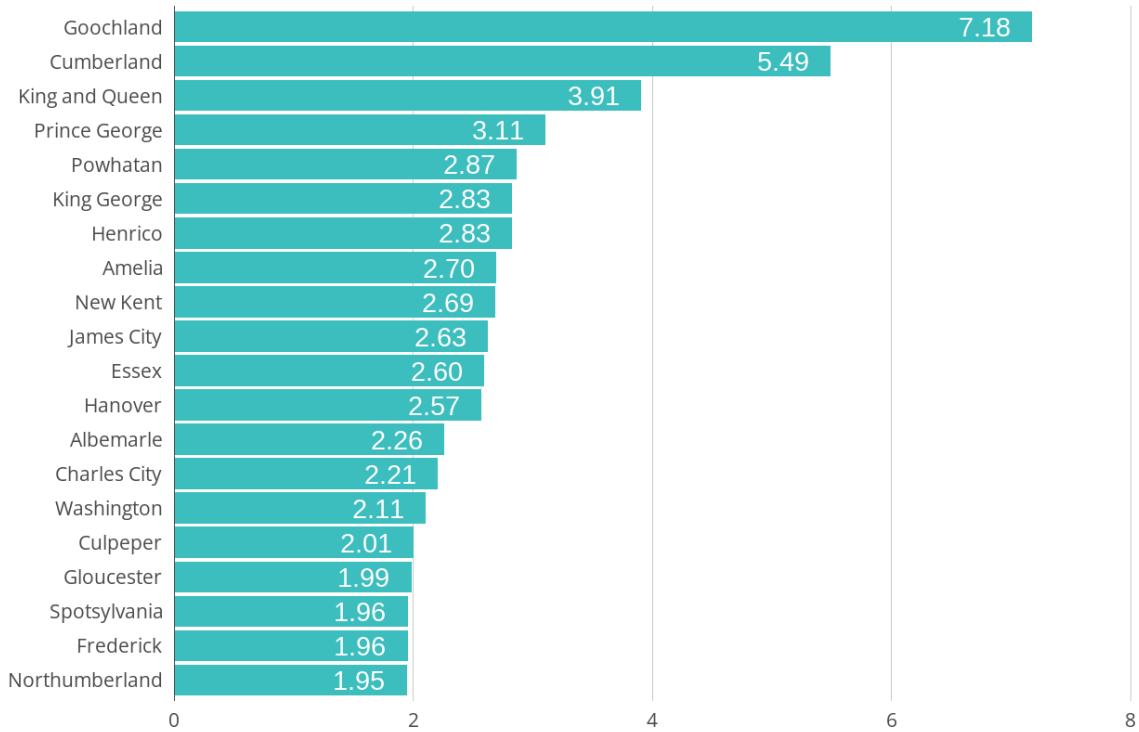
Source: HousingForward Virginia & LOVELAND Technologies, Regrid 2024 Dataset.

At the local level, we can identify jurisdictions with significant acreage of faith-based owned parcels. Based on median parcel size, Goochland County leads its nearest peer by over 1.5 acres with a median parcel size of 7.18 acres. Cumberland County comes in at 5.5 acres. The PlanRVA region is well-represented among jurisdictions with large median parcel sizes - with Goochland, Powhatan, Henrico, New Kent, Hanover, and Charles City represented (6 of the 8 counties/cities within the PDC).

Figure 4.5: Median size of faith-owned parcels by locality

Median size of faith-owned parcels by locality

Top 20 localities by median parcel size (acres)



Source: HousingForward Virginia & LOVELAND Technologies, Regrid 2024 Dataset.

The top ten organizations who own the most land in jurisdictions along the I-95/I-64 corridor are listed below. The Presbyterian League of the Presbytery of Eastern Virginia owns the most acreage with 12 parcels that amount to 3,429 acres in New Kent County. None of the top owners are located within a major city, but are largely in rural communities.

Table 4.1: Top ten largest faith-based land owners in regions along I-95/I-64

Owner	Jurisdiction	Total Acres	Median Parcel Size	Parcels
Presbyterian League Of The Pres.	New Kent	3429.02	285.75	12
New Kent Christian Center	New Kent	326.41	65.28	5
First Baptist Church Of Marshall Heights, D Drummond & A Teel, Tr	King George	265.36	265.36	1
New Life Church Of Hampton Trustees	Southampton	243.58	243.58	1
International Mission Board, S B C	Hanover	234.69	3.07	5
Southside Church Of Nazarene	Chesterfield	207.02	50.92	4
James River Baptist Church	James City	197.65	197.65	1
Saint Pauls Baptist Church	Henrico	177.39	49.1	4
The Edge Christian Camp Inc	Surry	167.69	167.69	1
Williamsburg Christian Retreat Assoc Inc	James City	158.48	158.48	1

Further exploration of ownership in specific jurisdictions of interest may yield results that would facilitate conversation about current use and future plans for parcels. The current investigation would only be enhanced with major ground-truthing efforts and outreach to individual parcel owners.

5 General Assembly districts

The introduction of the Faith in Housing bill into the Virginia General Assembly presents an opportunity to also explore faith-based parcel ownership based on house and senate districts. This provides state legislatures with a unique perspective on aspects of faith-based parcel ownership within their districts.

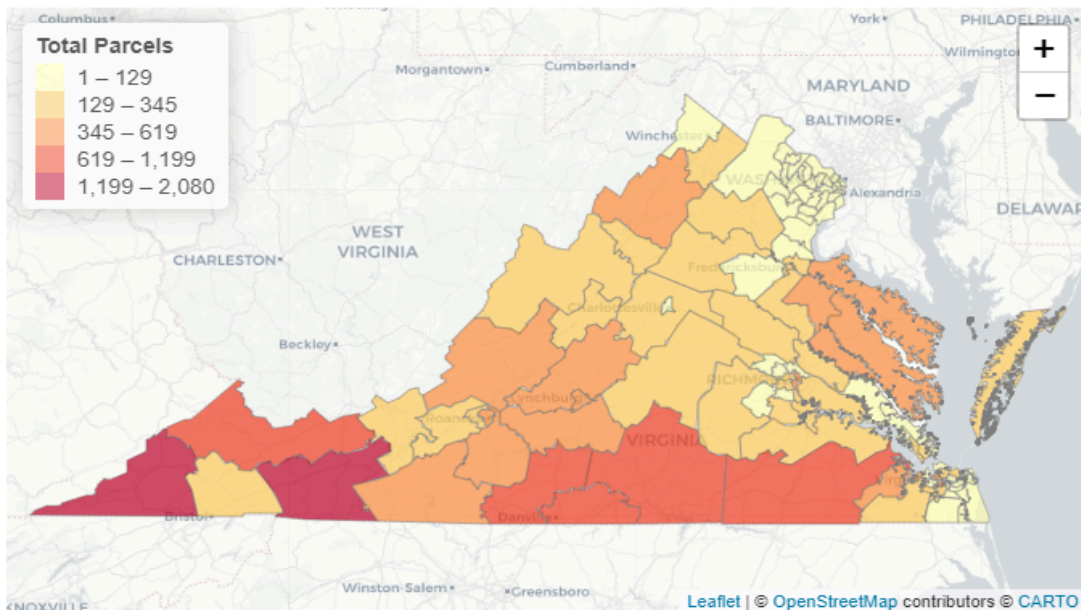
State legislative districts in Virginia

There are 100 House Districts and 40 Senate Districts in the Virginia General Assembly. District lines were [recently redrawn](#) in 2021 by the Supreme Court of Virginia after Virginia's Redistricting Commission never came to an agreement.

5.1 House Districts

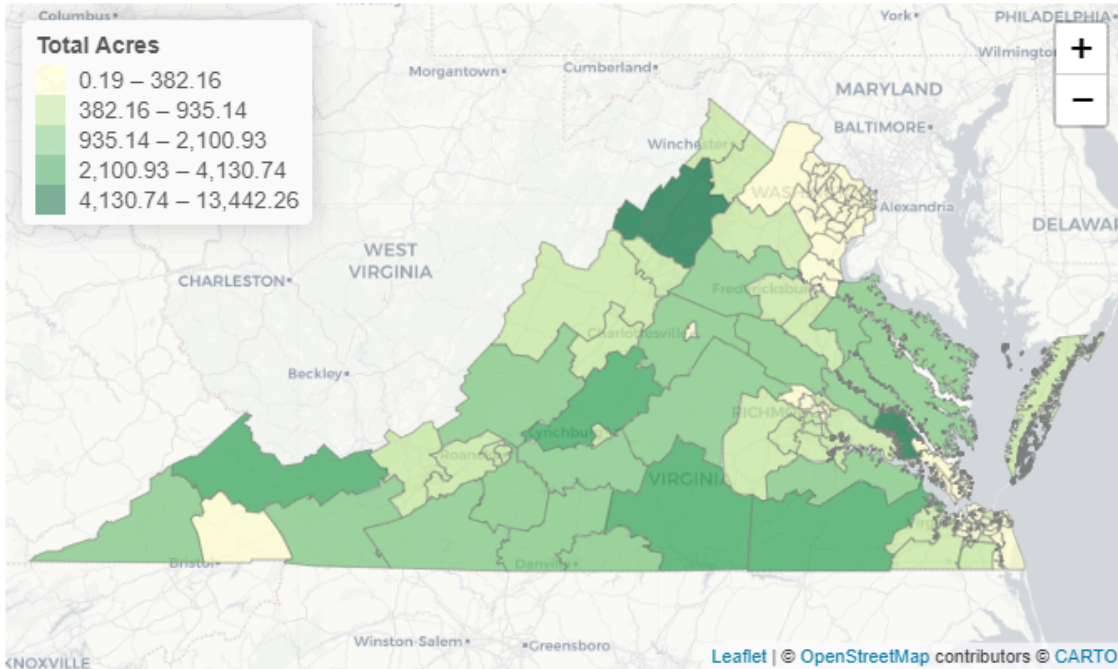
Based on House Districts, the majority of faith-based parcel ownership is in southern and southwest Virginia. House Districts 45 and 46 contain the largest number of parcels owned by faith organizations, 2,080 and 1,199, respectively. They are followed by House District 49 (928 parcels).

Figure 5.1: Total parcels by House District



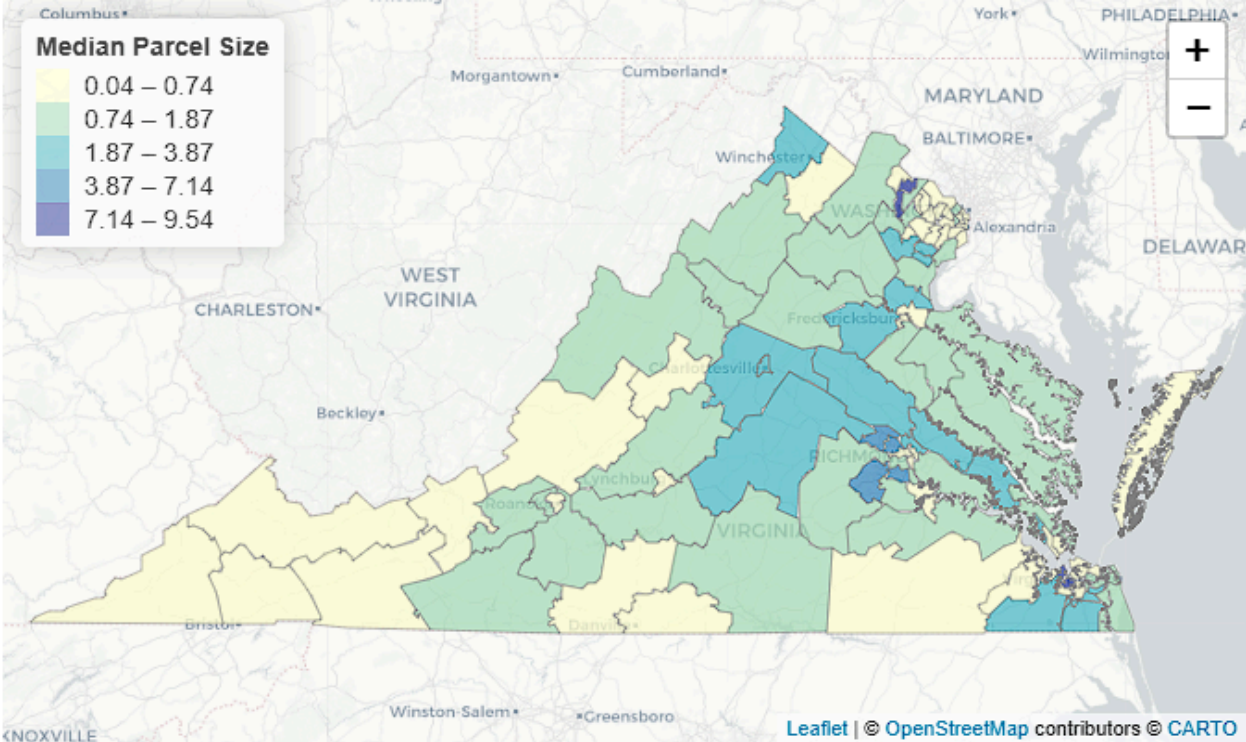
When focused on total acreage of faith-owned parcels, House District 33 and House District 71 exceed their peers. House District 33's large amount of faith-owned land is due greatly to the presence of Shrine Mont, a large retreat and conference center located in Orkney Springs, Virginia and owned by the Episcopal Diocese.

Figure 5.2: Total acres by House District



The median parcel size can better help us understand areas where there is adequate, contiguous land that could be developed. Based on House Districts, large parcels are located in House District 88 (9.54 acres), House District 28 (9.26 acres), and House District 26 (7.14). The presence of smaller median parcel size in a district does not necessarily mean that properties are too small to develop, but could be an indication of multiple adjacent parcels under the same ownership. However, the results provide us with a preliminary assessment of typical parcel size in each district.

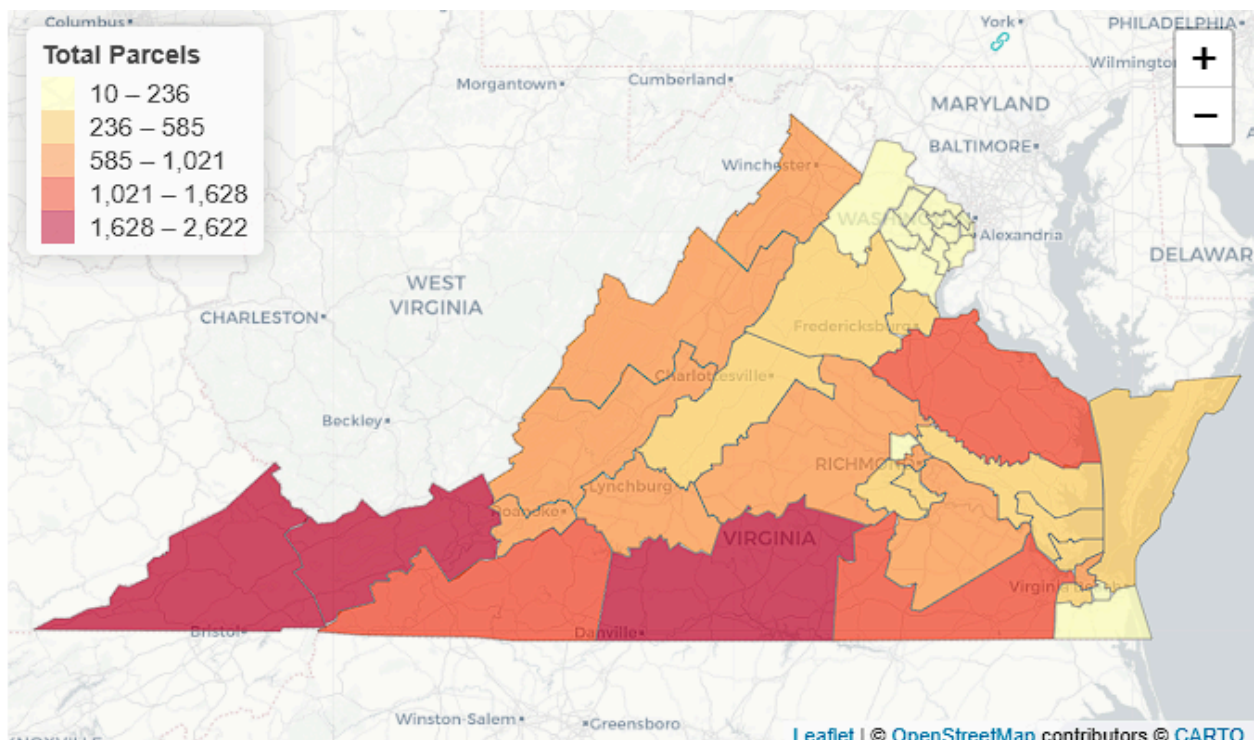
Figure 5.3: Median parcel size by House District



5.2 Senate Districts

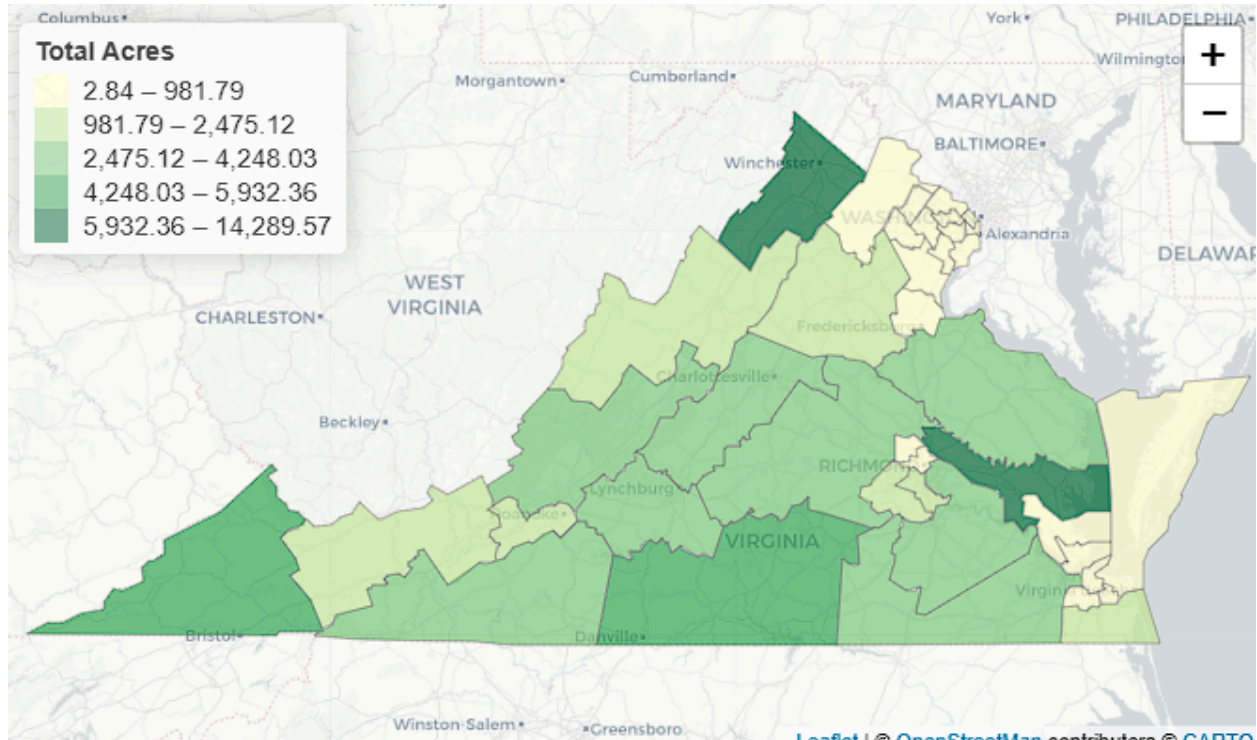
Senate Districts undoubtedly show similar patterns as House Districts. Senate Districts 9 (2,622) and 9 (2,317), in southwest and southern Virginia, contain the most faith-owned parcels. They are followed by other Senate Districts in the south and southwest part of the state.

Figure 5.4: Total parcels by Senate District



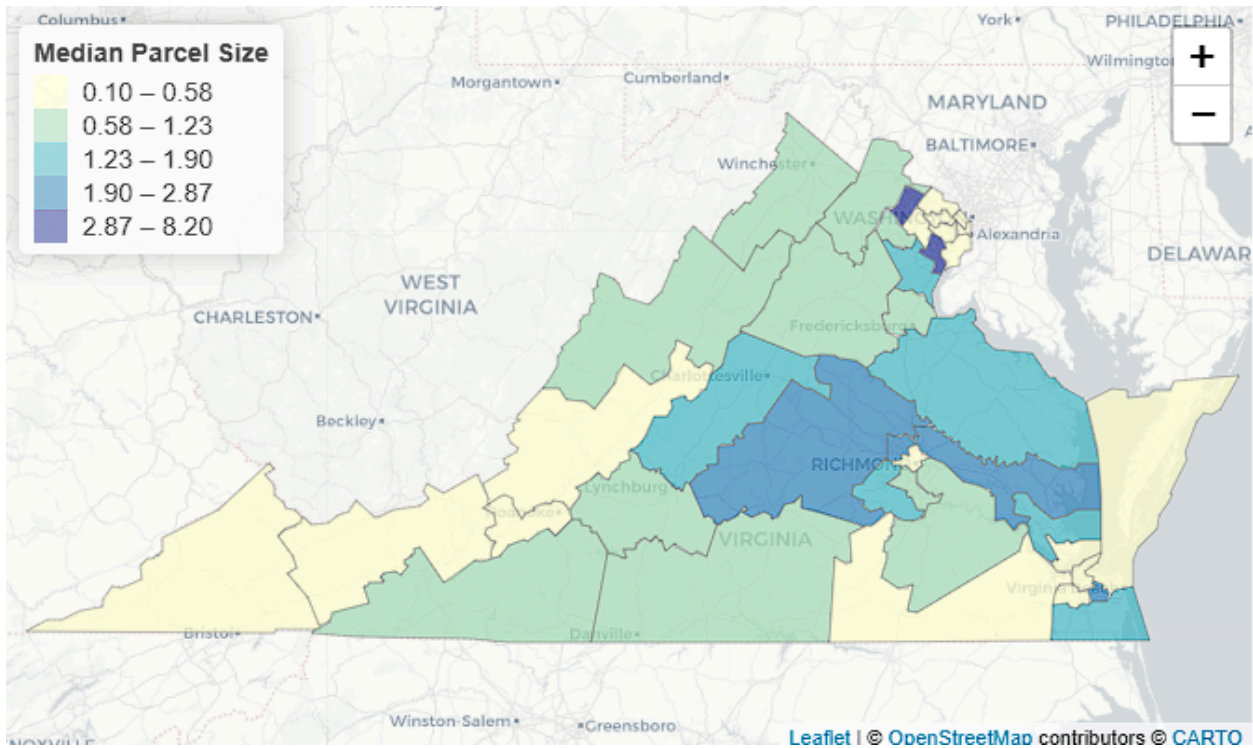
Senate Districts with the largest total acreage of faith-owned parcels are Senate Districts 1 (14,289.57 acres) and 26 (5,932.36 acres). Once again, Senate District 1 is impacted by the presence of Shrine Mont.

Figure 5.5: Total acres by Senate District



Senate Districts with larger median parcel sizes are around the Richmond region and Hampton Roads region. This is a change from House Districts, where House District 28 was ranked fairly high. The increase in the area of the Senate District likely contributed to the change in median parcel size, with the inclusion of more smaller sized parcels. Senate Districts 32 (8.2 acres) and 33 (2.87 acres) in Northern Virginia have large median parcel sizes. Senate Districts 16 (2.7 acres), 22 (2.49 acres), 26 (2.34 acres), and 10 (1.9 acres) also rank high among their peers in median parcel size.

Figure 5.6: Median parcel size by Senate District



The data presented above represents a snapshot of faith-owned parcels by Virginia General Assembly Districts. A full exploration of these parcels for site feasibility is outside the scope of this report. However, it is clear that a significant amount of land exists that could represent potential residential development.

6 Northern Virginia zoning

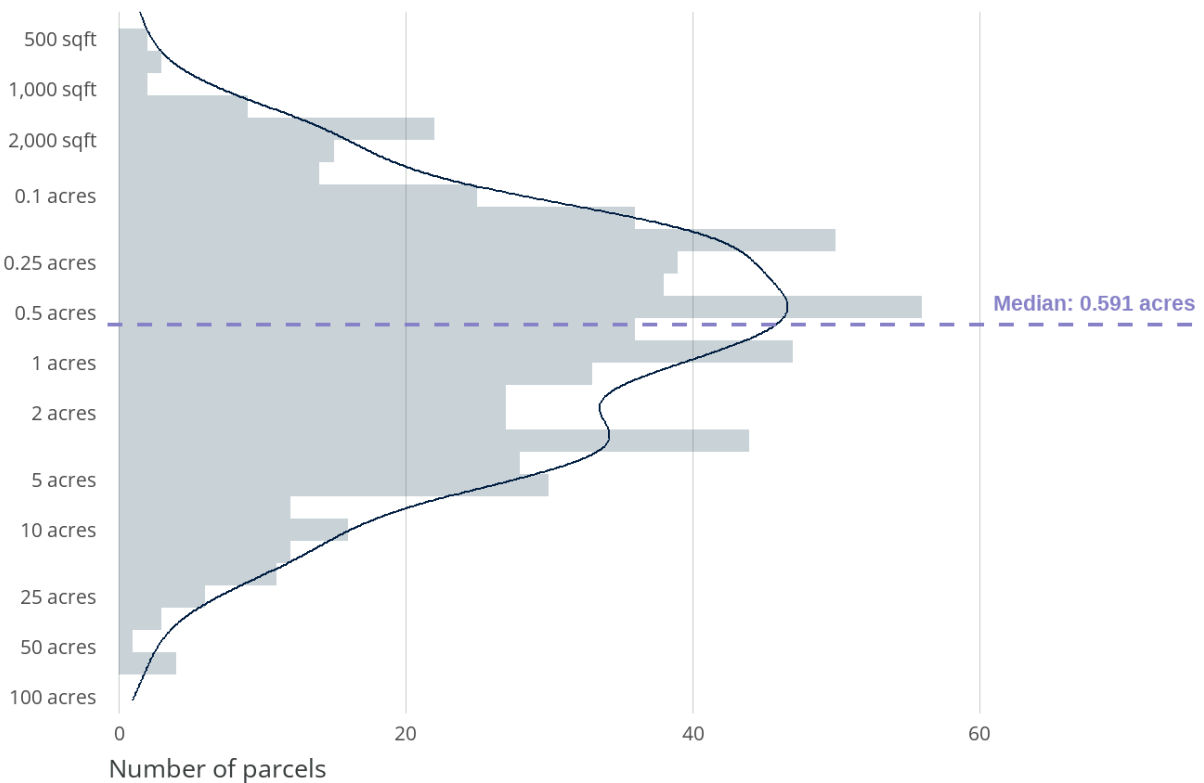
The Virginia Zoning Atlas presents a unique opportunity to leverage research already conducted by HousingForward Virginia and the Mercatus Center at George Mason University. With the Virginia Zoning Atlas, parcels identified can be associated with their respective zoning districts and the rules governing residential development on them.

Conducting a spatial join in QGIS between the 652 identified parcels and the Northern Virginia Zoning Atlas resulted in 648 parcels retained. The four parcels that were removed were located in areas not covered by the Virginia Zoning Atlas, most likely to the area being deemed protected or undevelopable. The median lot size among these 648 parcels is 25,723 square feet (0.59 acres). The number of parcels that are one acre or greater is 255, which is 39% of all parcels.

Figure 6.1: Distribution of lot sizes in NVRC region

Distribution of lot sizes in NVRC region

Small lots shown in square feet, larger lots in acres

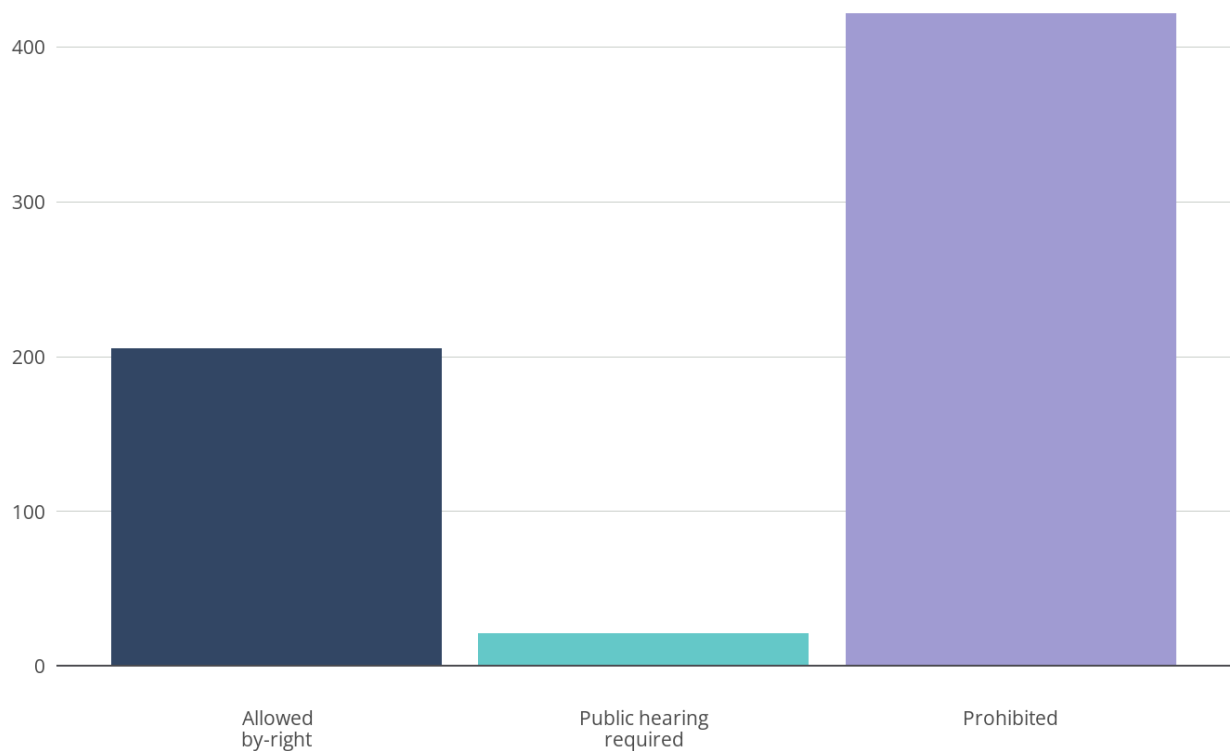


Based on the Virginia Zoning Atlas analysis, multifamily housing is prohibited on 422 of the identified parcels. A public hearing is required for multifamily housing development on 21 of those parcels, and it is allowed on 205 parcels by-right. If enacted as originally introduced in 2024, the Faith in Housing legislation could impact 443 parcels in the Northern Virginia Regional Commission service area (68% of identified parcels).

Figure 6.2: NVRC parcels by multifamily zoning treatment

Multifamily development potential for NVRC parcels

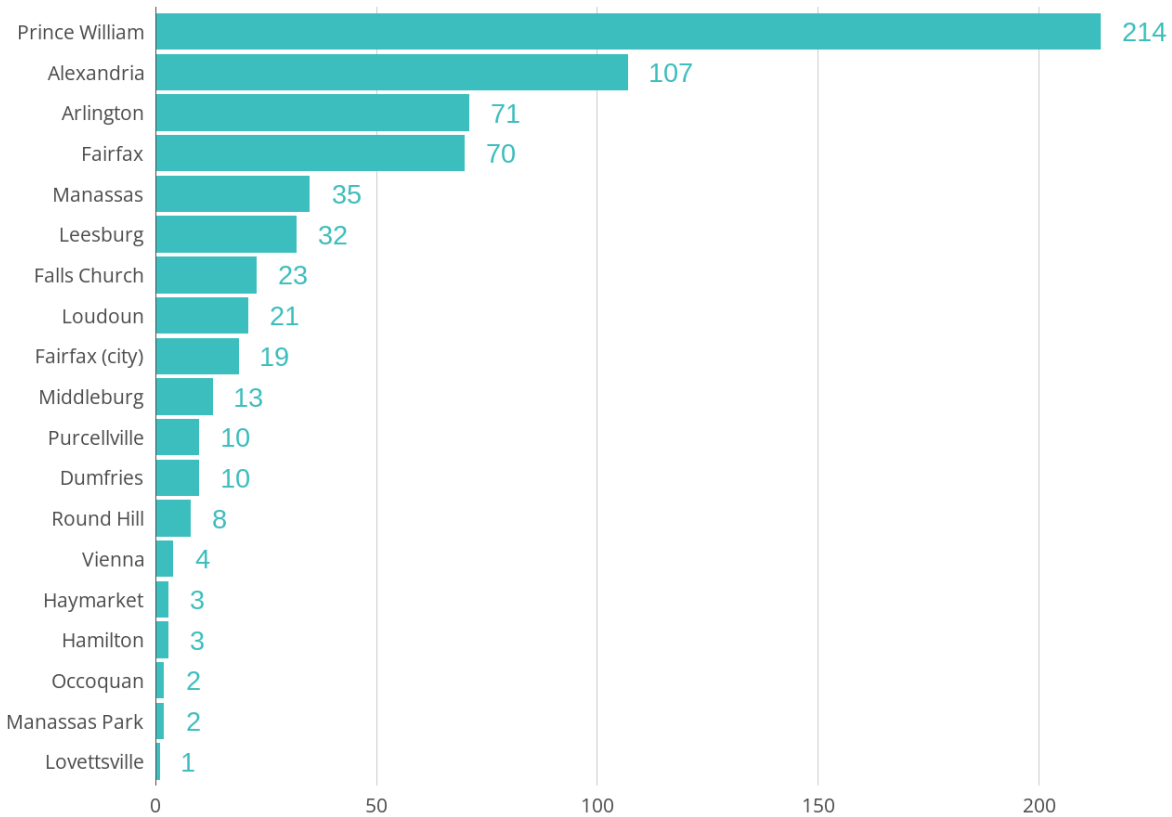
Current multifamily development treatment in local zoning



The graph below shows the number of faith-owned parcels in each jurisdiction within the Northern Virginia Regional Commission’s footprint. Prince William County contains the most faith-owned parcels at 214, followed by Alexandria at 107. The fewest parcels are mainly within smaller towns, but also the City of Manassas Park.

Figure 6.3: Total faith-owned parcels by jurisdiction in the NVRC region

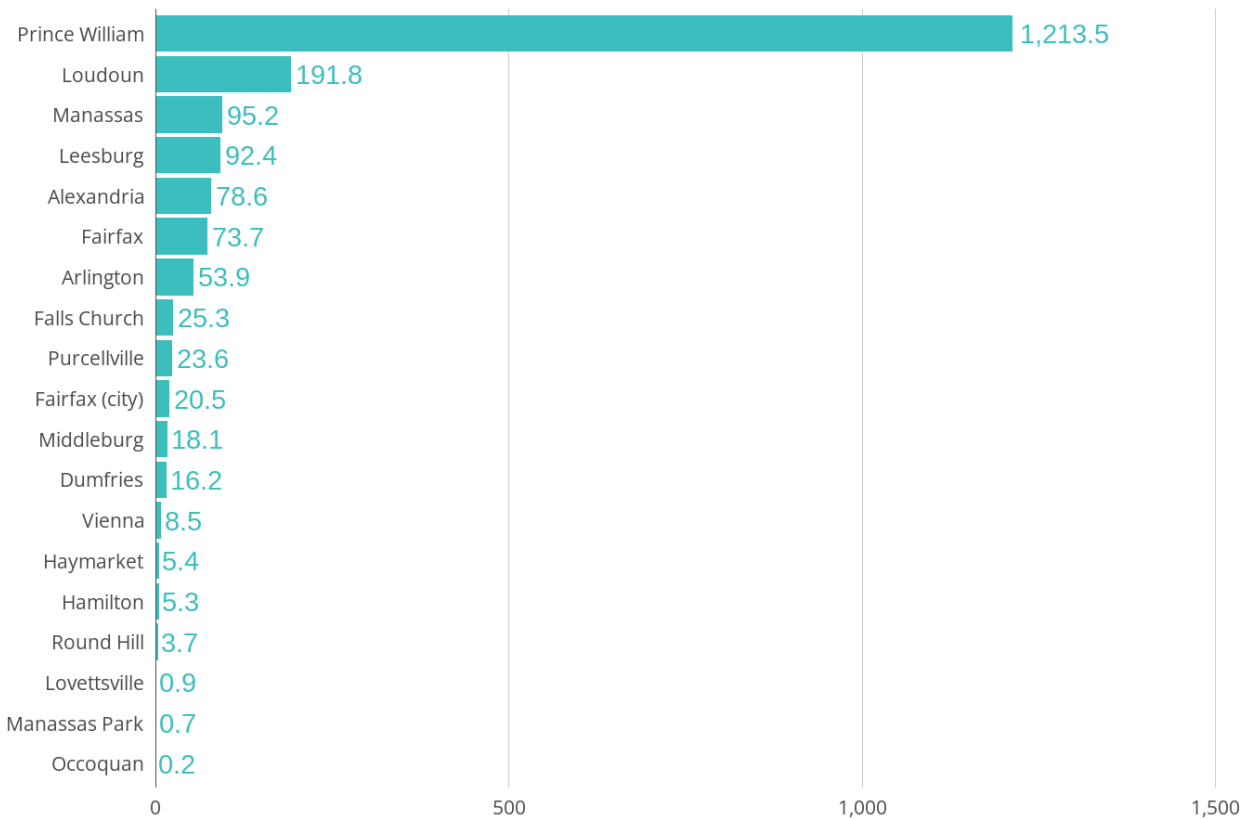
Total faith-owned parcels by jurisdiction in the NVRC region



Prince William County maintains its top spot when looking at total acreage of those faith-owned parcels (1,213.50 acres). But this time, they are followed by Loudoun County, who comes in at 191.75 acres, only a sixth of the acreage in Prince William. All other jurisdictions in the Northern Virginia region have a total acreage under 100 for faith-owned parcels.

Figure 6.4: Total acres of faith-owned parcels by jurisdiction in the NVRC region

Total acres of faith-owned parcels by jurisdiction in the NVRC region



The Virginia Zoning Atlas allows users and researchers to understand what types of housing can be built, and whether what can be built requires a public hearing process. This process called “entitlement” is a process that requires property owners and developers to meet certain requirements and receive approval from the governing body to build what it is proposing. There are important considerations that go into these decisions, such as whether what is being proposed aligns with the community’s comprehensive plan or whether the existing community opposes it or not. This process can be cumbersome and illicit irrational opposition based on misconceptions about density and change. Elected officials can easily be pushed by a vocal minority to vote down housing in spite of its alignment with community plans and explicit need.

The interactive chart below shows a breakdown of each jurisdiction in the Northern Virginia region in terms of:

- Total count of faith-owned parcels
- Percentage of those parcels that can be developed as single-family housing
- Percentage of those parcels that can be developed as two-family housing
- Percentage of those parcels that can be developed as three or more family housing

Table 6.1: Percent of parcels zoned by-right by residential use and jurisdiction

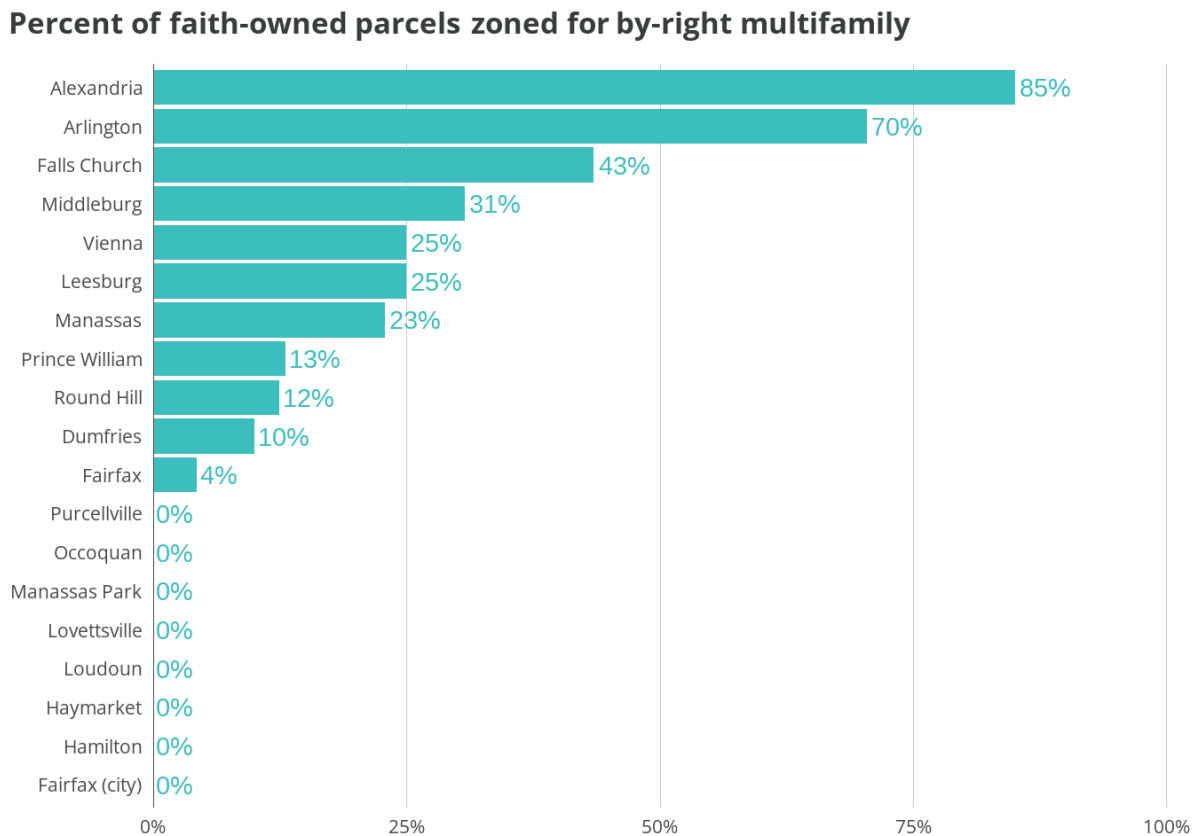
Jurisdiction	Parcels	Single-Family	Duplex	Multifamily (3+)
Alexandria	107	97.2%	97.2%	85.0%
Arlington	71	74.7%	70.4%	70.4%
Dumfries	10	50.0%	60.0%	10.0%
Fairfax	70	48.6%	22.9%	4.3%
Fairfax (city)	19	57.9%	0.0%	0.0%
Falls Church	23	78.3%	52.2%	43.5%
Hamilton	3	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Haymarket	3	100.0%	100.0%	0.0%
Leesburg	32	87.5%	71.9%	25.0%
Loudoun	21	23.8%	0.0%	0.0%
Lovettsville	1	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Manassas	35	60.0%	22.9%	22.9%
Manassas Park	2	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Middleburg	13	100.0%	38.5%	30.8%
Occoquan	2	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Prince William	214	72.9%	12.2%	13.1%
Purcellville	10	60.0%	10.0%	0.0%
Round Hill	8	100.0%	12.5%	12.5%
Vienna	4	75.0%	25.0%	25.0%

For a majority of parcels in the region, many could be redeveloped as single-family housing without having to go through a public hearing process. However, fewer and fewer parcels

can be redeveloped into denser housing options like duplexes or multifamily housing. Alexandria and Arlington are the most permissive due to their most recent zoning changes, but they have faced legal challenges that put the analysis into question in those areas. More recently a judge overturned the Missing Middle zoning changes in Arlington and these have no doubt impacted the analysis. What will come of the legal challenges in Alexandria is yet to be seen, but the Arlington decision certainly puts the permissiveness of faith-owned parcels in Alexandria in jeopardy.

The figure below specifically focuses on by-right multifamily housing. As mentioned before, the number for Alexandria could change pending a court case, while the Arlington number will have certainly changed and will require a reversion to the previous zoning ordinance without the most recent Missing Middle amendments. Following these two localities, the City of Falls Church allows for 44 percent of identified faith-owned parcels to be developed as multifamily housing by-right. These figures decrease across the remaining jurisdictions with some not allowing for any faith-owned parcels to be developed by-right as multifamily housing.

Figure 6.5: Percent of parcels zoned by-right for multifamily housing



7 Conclusions

This report represents a preliminary examination of faith-owned parcels in the Commonwealth of Virginia. With additional time and resources, a team of researchers could conduct a deeper dive to determine the potential development capacity of parcels. Such an analysis could yield a more accurate sense of the impact of the Faith in Housing Bill should property owners choose to exercise a new right to develop.

Nonetheless, the findings here represent the first attempt to identify parcels owned by faith-based organizations within the entire Commonwealth of Virginia. Over 20,000 parcels that amount to over 74,000 acres represents the potential to create two cities worth of housing should all parcels be viable for development.