

RELIGIOUS LAND USE WORKING GROUP
(A subcommittee of the Interfaith Advisory Board of Montgomery County)

Mission

The purpose of the Religious Land Use Working Group is to serve as an education and advocacy resource for the unique land use interests of Montgomery County faith communities with county (and when appropriate, regional and state) entities responsible for overseeing land use and related matters, while working to develop and maintain a respectful, collaborative, and effective working relationship between faith communities and these entities.

Goals

1. To develop and maintain a respectful, collaborative, and effective working relationship between the faith communities of Montgomery County and County Government and related entities responsible overseeing land use and related matters (e.g., tax/exemption policy), working to prevent or resolve conflict as necessary.
2. To educate Montgomery County faith communities about the laws, codes, and regulations affecting land use in Montgomery County, so that faith communities may better understand and more effectively negotiate them (and if necessary, appeal or advocate for changing them) in processes of land acquisition, in facilities design, construction, and expansion, in ongoing facilities use, and seeking and maintaining religious use property tax exemption.
3. To educate the appropriate departments of Montgomery County government and related entities about the special needs of faith communities in order that their staffs may be better prepared to provide them with effective services in matters related land acquisition, in facilities design, construction, and expansion, in ongoing facilities use, and religious use property tax exemption.
4. To advise the appropriate departments of Montgomery County government and related entities as to the impact of land use related laws, codes, policies, and regulations on Montgomery County faith communities, so that they do not unduly burden faith communities in the exercise of their first amendment rights to free exercise of religion and religious assembly, nor violate the federal *Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act*.