

Yes, In God's Back Yard



Serving Wake and Johnston Counties

What is YIGBY?

[Yes, In God's Back Yard](#) (YIGBY) is an emerging national movement of congregations repurposing their underutilized property for affordable housing. Discerning that they have enough buildings and property to meet their needs, congregations are transforming their underutilized resources to house those lacking quality, affordable housing.



A Theological Response to Not In My Back Yard

Every religious tradition teaches us to love our neighbor. It is antithetical to faith for religious people to be unwelcoming, especially to those in need. Yet, Not in My Backyard (NIMBY) exists whenever affordable housing is proposed in our communities.

The Yes, In God's Back Yard (YIGBY) movement turns this phenomenon upside down as a much-needed theological corrective. Instead of saying no to affordable housing, people of faith are saying yes to affordable housing in their backyard, especially in God's backyard – on property owned by the religious community.

Win-Win Movement

At a time when the religious landscape is changing, property previously acquired for future expansion is often no longer needed. Buildings requiring significant maintenance are becoming burdens not blessings. Repurposing projects help congregations to right size their infrastructure for ongoing congregational vitality while helping to meet one of the most pressing needs in our communities, the lack of affordable housing.

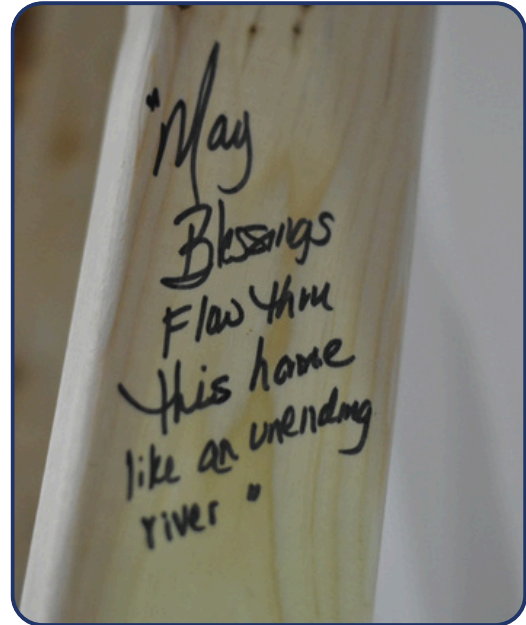
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Habitat Wake and YIGBY

Habitat Wake has evolved over 40 years to become a leading developer of affordable housing, developing many neighborhoods, with various types of housing ranging from single family homes, cottage court homes, and townhomes. As Yes, In God's Back Yard unfolds locally, Habitat Wake is now poised to be a resource to Wake and Johnston County congregations as they explore developing affordable housing on their underutilized property.



Habitat Wake and the Faith Community

Habitat for Humanity founders saw Habitat as a new frontier in congregational mission. Habitat was shaped to be a servant of the faith community to create a world where everyone had a quality place to call home. As such, the faith community fueled the Habitat movement to make it one of the most respected non-profits in the world. Habitat Wake is one of the most productive affordable housing developers in the Habitat network because of this vast support from the faith community.

With a passion for quality housing for all, the local faith community is now exploring repurposing projects as an extension of this commitment. Many congregations are beginning to discern that repurposing might be what God is calling them to do. Habitat Wake is having discussions with several local congregations about this opportunity, and we hope to announce our first repurposing project with Habitat Wake as the developer, soon. This project will generate as many as 28 homes.

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How Habitat Wake Can Help

Representatives of Habitat Wake's land acquisition and development team can meet with your congregational leaders to tour the property that you are considering repurposing. Our team can then work with site engineers to come up with a preliminary sketch of what Habitat Wake could possibly build on your property.



If Habitat Wake is a good fit, we can then enter into an agreement with your congregation for a period where due diligence is done on your property to make sure the property can produce the desired units. This would include holding meetings with municipal leaders to determine what is possible for the property and what rezoning would be required. This would also include performing environmental and other studies as needed. If all goes well, we proceed to rezoning (if required), closing, development, and construction. It's a long process, but we would journey with you as you have journeyed with us over the years.



If Habitat Wake is not a good fit for what you envision for your property, we can recommend other affordable housing developers to you. If you go with another developer, we will still champion your project. If desired, we would be willing to mobilize local congregations to support your rezoning case.





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Pioneering Local Example

Habitat Wake partner, Greenwood Forest Baptist Church in Cary, provides a wonderful illustration of the YIGBY movement. This church discerned that its campus needed right-sizing. Its buildings were no longer meeting the needs of the community. So, the church is partnering with the Taylor Family YMCA, The Caring Place and DHIC to replace its most outdated facilities with the [Timothy Ash Carr Center](#). The Carr Center will generate 51 units of affordable housing, funds for the congregation to refresh its remaining buildings, and a funding stream to sustain the congregation's vital ministry.

The church's project needed rezoning. Neighborhood meetings were filled with NIMBY sentiment. Yet the church continued bolstered by the growing support from the local faith community saying Yes, In God's Backyard, with the final rezoning meeting having over 130 people of faith holding Yes to Affordable Housing placards.

Other Examples

[The Presbytery of New Hope](#) | Repurposing has been completed on the property of the former Milner Memorial Presbyterian Church in Raleigh where Brightspire and DHIC have built Milner Commons, a 156-unit complex for seniors with modest means.

[Mount Vernon Baptist Church](#) | A partnership with Durham Habitat has started to build affordable homes on the church's property.

[Heart of the Rockies Christian Church \(CO\)](#) | As an expression of the Church's Christian faith, they are making 8 of their 11 acres available to create [Heartside Hill](#) which will include 72 apartments with CARE housing, 9 Habitat homes with Fort Collins Habitat for Humanity, and 2 homes for adults with developmental disabilities with L'Arche Fort Collins.

[Loveland Habitat](#) | Construction is set to begin on 167 affordable housing units in Loveland, Colorado on land donated by Grace Lutheran Church.

Questions?

Contact Rick Beech, VP of Faith Relations at rick.beech@habitatwake.org.