

Unified Development Ordinance

CITY OF HOLLAND, MICHIGAN

The City of Holland is a historic and well-maintained community, with waterfront, neighborhood business districts, legacy industrial areas, and one of Michigan’s most successful downtowns.

In spite of its strengths, the City’s zoning ordinance was originally written in 1943 and amended—but never fully rewritten—dozens of times since. Recognizing that a code commensurate with the community’s expectations was overdue, Holland leaders engaged McKenna to engage in a comprehensive rewrite. Part of this important effort was to incorporate not only zoning regulations, but also the City’s subdivision ordinance and other development-related standards; accordingly, the codes were renamed the Unified Development Ordinance.

McKenna and City staff engaged in a comprehensive public outreach program, including a week-long charrette, neighborhood meetings, online surveys, stakeholder engagement, and a series of public hearings held around the City.

The ordinance included a number of innovative elements, including:

- A form-based code for the downtown and select corridors and neighborhood business districts.
- A “greenfield” district to ensure that undeveloped sites on the edge of the city would be built out in an urban format.
- A “redevelopment” mixed use district for legacy industrial areas in the core of the City.
- An airport overlay, consistent with MDOT and FAA regulations, to ensure development near the airport would not be incompatible with aviation.
- A progressive landscaping section rooted in sustainability.

