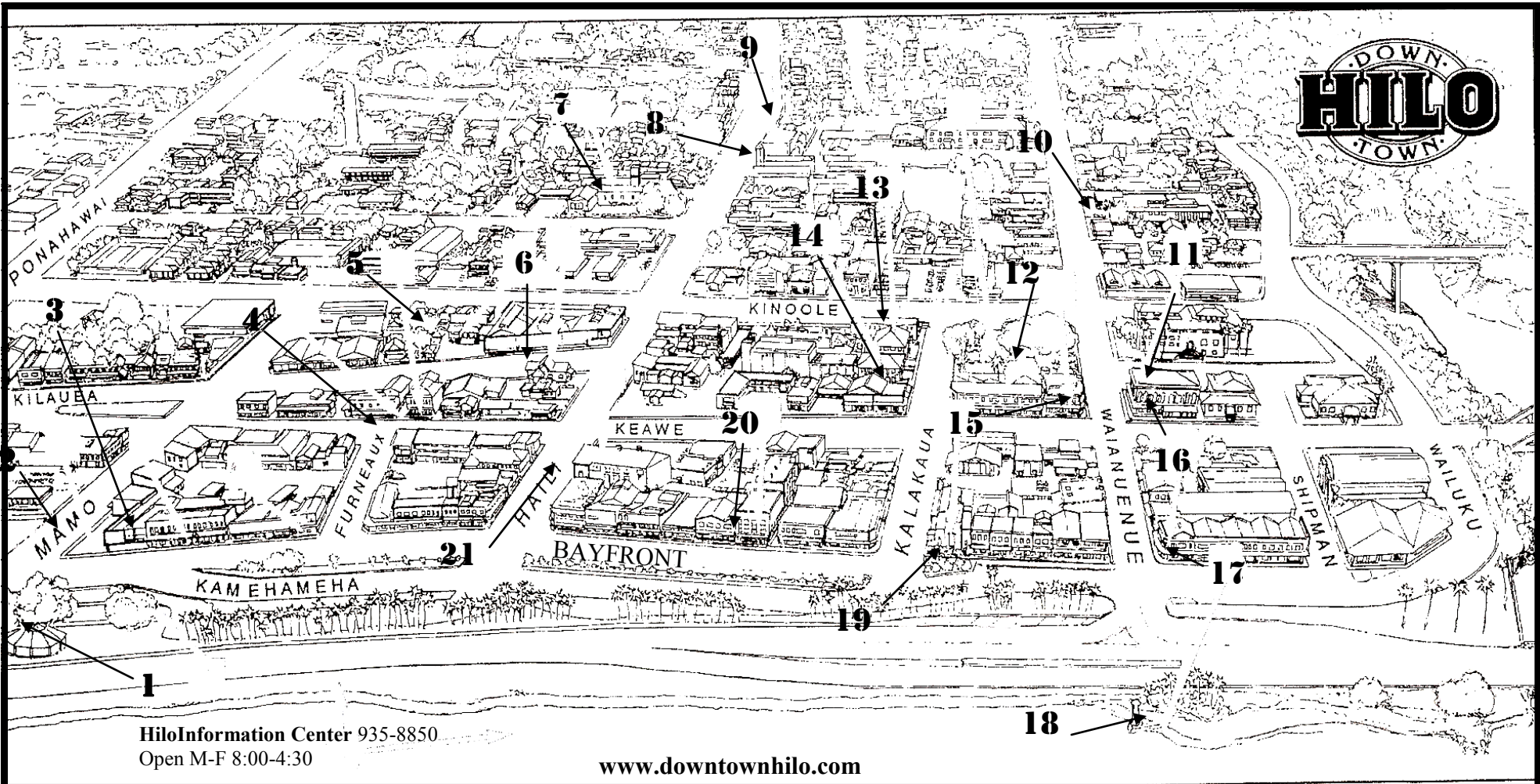


Historic Downtown Hilo Walking Tour

This self-guided walking tour of historic Downtown Hilo will take about one hour if walked continuously. We encourage you to go at your own pace and spend additional time discovering and exploring that which interests you.

The twenty-one stops along the way will provide you with information about the town from 1870 to the present. The history of Hilo begins much earlier, however, with the arrival of the Polynesians in 1100 A.D. They eventually inhabited the shores of Hilo Bay, farmed their crops, fished, and traded their goods with each other along the Wailuku River. Changes came to this lifestyle upon the arrival of missionaries who brought with them new ideas, education and Christianity. Hilo became a stopping place for explorers curious about the active volcanoes, whaling ships, and traders. By the 1900's a number of wharves had been constructed, the breakwater was begun, and a new railroad system designated Hilo as the center of commerce. Two destructive tsunamis in 1946 and 1960 caused a shift in the location of Hilo's government and commercial life. Today, historic Downtown Hilo is alive and bustling with renewed energy. New and old businesses alike are meeting the challenges of revitalizing our city center while preserving its historic cultural character.

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1. Mooheau Park Visitor Information Center

The Mo'ohau Bus Terminal, central station for the Hele-On bus system, is home to the Visitor Information Center. Here the helpful staff can provide you with information on accommodations, activities and dining in East Hawai'i as well as maps, brochures and bus schedules. It's also Headquarters for the Hilo Downtown Improvement Association, which provides leadership to make Downtown Hilo a safe and attractive place to live work

2. Hilo Farmer's Market

Conceived and developed in 1988 by Richard "Mike" Rankin, the Hilo Farmers Market had a humble beginning with only four farmers who sold their goods from their parked cars and trucks. Today, the market has grown to over 200 vendors selling everything from fresh island fruits and vegetables to locally grown tropical flowers, special Big Island food products, handmade craft items and beautiful gifts made with Aloha.

3. S. Hata Building/ Mokupāpapa

This is another example of renaissance revival architecture in Hilo. Built by the Hata family in 1912, it has now been remodeled to house restaurants, shops, and professional office space. In the building, The National Oceanographic Institute has constructed the Mokupāpapa to interpret the natural science, culture, and history of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands and surrounding marine environment. Featuring interactive displays, engaging three-dimensional models and immersive theater stop in and learn about marine science of the Hawaiian Islands.

4. Ancient Order of Foresters Building

You are standing just across the building on Keawe Street that is still used by the Ancient Order of Foresters, a group whose European origins were chartered to assist members during times of need. King Kalākaua was a member of this fraternal order. The building was constructed in 1925 in the renaissance revival style with arched entryways, balconies and columns used for decorative purposes.

5. Taishoji Soto Mission

Tucked away in this section of Hilo is a mission established in 1913 by the Zen Buddhists. In earlier times there were over 800 members.

6. Central Christian Church

Haili Street at one time was called Church Street because there were five churches along its route. Today three remain, one of which is Central Christian Church. It was built for the Portuguese speaking community in the early 1900's. The two buildings on the property look much the way they did when they were built.

7. Haili Church

The first church building, a large grass canoe shed provided by the local chiefs, was completed and dedicated on May 19, 1824 near the site of the present Hilo Iron Works. The present structure, started in 1854, was completed and dedicated on April 8, 1859. On July 15, 1979, fire destroyed the tower, ceiling and some of the interior of this building. The restored church was rededicated on June 1, 1980.

8. St. Joseph Church

St. Joseph Catholic Church, designed in the style of old mission architecture has a clock made by the Seth Thomas Clock Company in Thomaston, Connecticut, which first chimed on the half hour around the clock until nearby residents complained of the disturbance.

9. Lyman Museum and Mission House

The Lyman Museum building depicts the multi-cultural past in "telling the story of Hawai'i, its islands, and its people." Learn about the missionary era by touring the early 19th Century Mission House with an interpretive guide. seashell collections.

10. Naha Stone/Hilo Library

Traditions tell us that the Naha Stone, the larger stone, was brought by canoe from the chiefly valley of Wailua on Kauai to Hilo many centuries ago. The stone resided at one of several heiau (temples) in the Hilo area and was said to have been associated with traditions of affirming chiefly status. Young ali'i (royalty) infants were placed alone on the stone. If they did not cry they were said to be of high royal status. The physical ability to move the massive stone was also seen as a sign of high chiefly capacity. The young ali'i Kamehameha was known to have confirmed the prophecy that he would become a great warrior king by moving the stone while he was in his early 20's.

The Pinao Stone, the upright stone, has less certain origins but is associated with the former Pinao Heiau that once stood on or near the site of this State Library.

These two great stones are associated with sacred Hawaiian traditions and are held in high cultural esteem by Hawaii's people.

Please do not sit or climb on the stones.

11. Post Office Federal Building

The Federal Building located across the street from the north end of the park. Designed by architect Henry Whitfield, it is typical of the early 20th Century government buildings. Today, it houses government offices, including the downtown branch of the United States Post Office. The original structure was built in 1919, and the two wings were added in 1936. A Historic Building.

12. Kalākaua Square

Hilo became a visiting place of the king who designed the first county complex at this site in the late 19th Century. The park contains a sundial bearing the inscription. "This sundial was erected in the Fourth Year of the reign of King Kalākaua, A.D. 1877, Hilo, Hawaii." The trees in the park were planted during King Kalākaua's time, making them over one hundred years old.

13. East Hawai'i Cultural Center

Originally the old Police Station, it was vacated by the Hilo County Police Department in 1975. Today, it is the home of the East Hawaii Cultural Center. The building resembles a Hawaiian *hale* (house) of the 1800's with its hipped roof. A Historic Building.

14. Hawaiian Telephone Company Building

C.W. Dickey is credited with developing Hawaiian Regional Architecture in the early 20th Century. Note the high-hipped, green tile roof and the brightly colored terra cotta tiles set in the building.

15. Burns Building and the Pacific Building

These wooden buildings are typical of many in Hilo constructed in the early part of the 20th Century. The simple style that emerged is now very special to Hawai'i.

16. Kaikodo Building (Toyama Building)

Built in 1908 using steel beams on reinforced concrete, it was among the first "fireproof" commercial buildings in Hilo and was called "the finest of its kind in the Territory." The First Trust Building (also formerly known as the Hilo Masonic Lodge) has been elected to both the National and State Registers of Historic Buildings and Places.

17. Koehnen's Building

It was originally built for the Hackfield Company in 1910, with interior walls of *koa* and floors of *'ōhi'a* woods. The Koehnens bought the building in 1957 and today the family operates a store which sells fine furniture, gift items, silver, and china.

18. Kaipalaoa Landing Wharf

Between 1863 and 1890 wharves were built at the foot of Waianuenu Avenue where passengers and freight were transported between the wharf and steamers anchored in the bay.

19. Pacific Tsunami Museum

This sturdy concrete building with its parapet, fluted columns and wrought iron design was built in 1930. It survived both the 1946 and 1960 tsunami and is now a museum chronicling the history of Big Island tsunamis and the resulting reconstruction of the city.

20. S.H. Kress Company Building

When it opened in 1932, floral designs, batwing shapes, and the terra cotta front contributed to introducing a new kind of architecture –Art Deco. The interior of the store offered many shopping conveniences including wide aisles, good lighting, and a popular soda fountain.

21. Palace Theater

This historic theater is the venue for a blend of ethnic groups that make up today's unique melting pot of cultures. Concerts, stage plays, musicals, film festivals, gatherings and celebrations provide Hilo's residents and visitors with a full artistic menu.