This self-guided walking tour will take about one hour if walked continuously. Please go at your own pace and enjoy exploring historic Hilo!

The 21 stops along the way provide information about the town’s history dating from 1870 to the present. The history of Hilo begins much earlier, however. Circa 1100 AD, the first Hilo inhabitants arrived from Polynesia and lived along the Wailuku and Wailoa Rivers and the shores of Hilo Bay. During the time of ancient Hawaii they farmed, fished, and traded goods.

Changes came to this lifestyle in 1778 with the arrival of the first European explorers, and in 1820 with the arrival of missionaries. Hilo soon became a stopping place for whaling ships, traders, and explorers curious about the active volcanoes. By the early 1900s a number of wharves had been constructed, the breakwater was begun, and a new railroad system designated Hilo as a center of commerce. Two destructive tsunamis in 1946 and 1960 destroyed the rail system and caused a dramatic shift in the local economy.

Today, downtown Hilo is alive and bustling with renewed energy. New and old businesses alike are meeting the challenge of revitalizing our city center while preserving Hilo’s historic character.
1. Mo'侧重 Park & Bus Terminal  Dedicated in 1905, the park is now central station for Hilo's Helelo\n bus system. A kiosk next to the terminal is home to Destination Hilo's Aloha Information Station. Helpful\n agents there can direct you with information on accommodations, activities, and dining in East Hawai'i,\n as well as maps, brochures, and bus schedules. Destination Hilo strives to perpetuate authentic Hawaiian experiences for visitors through its Greetings and other programs.

2. Mo'侧重 Bandstand  A gift from Admiral George \n Buckelew to the people of Hilo when the park was \n dedicated in 1905, the bandstand was built for the \n Hilo Band and is still used for concerts, events, and performances. The 1945 tsunami destroyed all buildings on the makai (ocean) side of Kamehameha Avenue except the bandstand.

3. S. Hata Building  Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, this building is one of the most \n recognizable landmarks in Hilo. A good example of \n renaissance revival style with its arches, diamonds, \n and decorative columns, this building is still used on \n orched windows on the second floor; it was erected in 1912 \n as a general store by Japanese immigrant Sadanosuke Hata \n and his family.

4. A.O.F Building  Built in 1925 in the renaissance \n revival style with arched entryways, balconies, and \n decorative columns, this building is still used for \n the Ancient Order of Foresters, a group with European \n origins that was chartered to assist during times of need.

5. Tahsoi Soto Mission  Hilo's Zen Temple, the \n mission was founded in 1915 and constructed in 1918. \n Erazo and Soto Zen mission built on the \n island of Hawaii. With its beginnings rooted in early \n plantation days, the Mission remains a family-oriented \n temple, in which daily prayer and meditation (a Buddhist meditation discipline) practice twice weekly.

6. Central Christian Church  Originally the Portuguese \n Evangelical Church, there are still members of the \n congregation whose fathers and grandparents helped build the church in 1892. The name was changed \n in 1935 to the Central Christian Church.

7. Halli Church  The original church building, a large \n grass canoe shed provided by the local chiefs, was \n completed and dedicated on May 18, 1824 near \n the site of the present Hilo Iron Works. This was followed in 1825, 1829, and 1842 by three more thatched \n churches. The fifth and present structure, begun in 1884, \n was completed and dedicated on April 8, 1859. On \n July 15, 1979 a fire destroyed the tower, ceiling, and stone \n of the interior of this building. The restored church \n was rededicated on June 1, 1980. The Halli Church \n Choir, established in 1902 and conducted into the Hawaiian Music Hall of Fame, still sings at services and presents an annual Christmas Cantata.

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

9. Lyman Museum & Mission House  The Smith- \n sonian-affiliated Lyman Museum highlights Native \n Hawaiian culture, island geology and volcanoes, \n sea shells, and heraldic symbols from a vast array of \n natural habitats and diverse cultural groups that \n make up today's Hawai'i. The adjacent Mission House is \n the oldest frame house in the State of Hawai'i, a canoe \n building of the 19th-century craftsmanship and décor, and may be seen by guided tour. It was built in the late 1830s (restored in 2010), it was built by David and Sarah Lyman, missionaries from New England.

10. Naha & Pinao Store/Hiio Public Library  The \n Naha & Pinao Store is a general store on a head\n chieftain of Waialua on Kaua‘i, many centuries \n ago. It resided at one of several heiau (temples) in the \n area and was associated with traditions of affirming \n chiefs and royalty. According to legend, its (royal) infants \n were placed alone on the stone. If they did not cry they \n were said to be of high royal status. The ability to move \n the massive stone was also seen as a sign of high chiefly \n capacity. Kamehaeha, when in his early 20s, confirmed \n the prophecy that he would become a great warrior king \n by carrying the stone. At the beginning of 19th century, \n the store was abandoned by the Pinao Store. The Pinao Store \n that is now located on the Sand River, a sacred \n place for Hilo’s people. The sacred stones are held in high \n cultural esteem by Hawai’i’s people.

11. The Fernald Building & Post Office  Located across \n the street from Kalakaua park, this stately building \n was designed by architect Henry Whittfield and is \n typical of Hilo's early 20th-century government buildings. \n Formerly the courthouse, today it houses government \n offices, including the downtown branch of the U.S. Post \n Office. The original structure, one of the first in Hawai‘i \n noteworthy for its use of reinforced concrete, was built in \n 1919, and the two wings were added in 1936. It has been recently renovated.

12. Kalakaua Square  Hilo's town square for over \n a century. Hilo became a vibrant place of King \n Kalakaua, who designed the first county complex \n at this site in the late 19th century. The park contains \n a sundial bearing the inscription: "This sundial was erected \n in the Fourth Year of the reign of King Kalakaua, A.D. 1877, \n Hilo, Hawai‘i." The trees in the park were planted \n during the King’s time, making them over one hundred years \n old today. The park also contains a memorial inscribed with \n the names of the dead from Hawaii’s Island from World \n War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War.

13. East Hawai‘i Cultural Center/Hawai‘i Museum of \n Contemporary Art  Completed in October 1932, this building is listed on the National Register \n of Historic Places. It is the third structure built until \n 1969, then housed the Hawai‘i County Police Department \n until 1975. The center now provides programs including \n dance, music, and drama; and exhibitions of local \n and international artists.

14. Hawaiian Telephone Co. Building  C. W. Dickey \n is credited with developing Hawaiian Regional \n Architecture in the early 20th century. Note the \n high forehead, chimney tile, and the brightly colored \n terra cotta tiles set in the building.

15. Burns Building and the Pacific Building  These \n wooden buildings are typical of many in Hilo \n constructed in the early part of the 20th century. \n The simple style that emerged is now very special \n to Hilo. The Burns Building (on the corner) was built \n in 1913, with stores at street level, and a rooming house \n above.

16. Kailoide Building (Toyon Building, former Hilo \n Masonic Lodge Building)  Built in 1908 using steel \n beams and reinforced concrete, this was among the \n first "fireproof" commercial buildings in Hilo and was \n called "the finest of its kind in the territory." Home to \n Hilo's first Masonic Lodge, the building is listed on both \n the National and State Registers of Historic Places.

17. Kanohe's Building / Mokupapa Discovery \n Center  This lovely historic structure was originally \n built for the Hackfeld Company in 1910, with \n interior walls of koa and floors of 'Ohi'a (native woods). \n The Kanohehens bought the building in 1957 and operated a \n store here for many years selling fine furnishings. Today the \n building houses the National Oceanographic Institute's \n Mokupapa Discovery Center, created to interpret the

nature science, culture, and history of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. The exhibit rooms feature a \n 3,500-gallon saltwater aquarium, interactive exhibits, \n life-sized models of wildlife found in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands, artwork inspired by those \n islands and by Hawaiian culture, and many interpretive \n panels in Hawaiian and English.

18. Kaipalaoa Landing  Between 1863 and 1890 a \n landing wharf and U.S. Coast Guard lighthouse \n were built at the foot of Waiainuane Avenue. Passengers \n and freight were transported to steamers anchored in the \n bay. Legends note that the site served as a campground \n and favorite surfing spot for King Kamehameha I, and \n is where Hilo town was once known. As Kaipalaoa set off \n from Kaipalaoa, he left his servants to stand watch over \n his canoe. As time passed, they became worried for his \n safety. They made a rope by twisting it leaves together, \n and then tied it to the canoe. They believed that if his friend, \n Kamehameha had not come back, that the rope would \n unravel. At first angered that his men did not watch the canoe, Kamehameha was surprised that they had made a rope and declared that this place be named Hilo.

19. Pacific Tsunami Museum  This concrete building \n with its parapet, fluted columns, and wrought-iron \n design was built in 1930. It survived both the 1946 \n and 1960 tsunamis and is now a museum chronicling \n the 1946 tsunami. This is the result of the reconstructed \n Hilo town. This building was designed by C.W. Dickey, one of Hilo's prominent architects.

20. S.H. Kress Co. Building  When it opened in 1932, its \n floral designs, batwing shapes, and terra cotta \n front helped introduce a new kind of architecture \n to Hilo. This Decor Arts Deco store offered many \n shopping conveniences including wide aisles, \n good lighting, and a popular soda fountain. The building \n housed Honolulu's Northwestern Hawaiian Islands until 1980, when U.S. Senator Hiram Fong purchased it in order to restore the historic and only remaining Kress building in the nation.

21. Palace Theater  The art deco-style Palace Theater was built and opened in 1925, originally part of \n a small chain of theaters owned and operated by \n Adrian C. Baker. The decoration of this theater was an \n innovation that gave customers unobstructed sight lines \n and created room for a spacious lobby in its limited \n property size. Today this historic theater, restored after \n heavy damage suffered in the 1960 tsunami, is a popular \n venue for concerts, stage plays, musicals, film festivals, \n movies, gatherings, and celebrations; providing Hilo's \n residents and visitors with a full art menu.