

TSUNAMI EDUCATION, PREPARATION AND RECOVERY PROJECT FOR DOWNTOWN HILO

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KEYWORDS: Tsunami, Education, Preparation, Recovery, Disaster, Downtown Hilo, Pacific, Community, Collaboration

"We believe that through education and awareness, no one should ever again die in Hawaii due to a tsunami" – Pacific Tsunami Museum Mission Statement

More people in the State of Hawai'i have died due to tsunami than all other natural disasters combined. The majority of those fatalities have been concentrated on the eastern coast of the "Big Island" (Hawai'i Island) and particularly in the coastal community of Downtown Hilo. For these residents, the threat of a major tsunami is a daily reality. It is under these conditions that the *Tsunami Education, Preparation and Recovery Project for Downtown Hilo* (hereafter *Tsunami Project*) was developed.

The *Tsunami Project* was designed to emphasize the following key elements: implementation of existing planning efforts, cross-sector collaboration, community-based reciprocal learning, and focused project products.

IMPLEMENTATION OF EXISTING PLANNING EFFORTS

Instead of creating yet another plan, the *Tsunami Project* focused on implementing action steps of existing planning efforts, most notably the Hawai'i CZM Ocean Resources Management Plan and the EnVision Downtown Hilo 2025 plan.

CROSS-SECTOR COLLABORATION

The *Tsunami Project* was a collaborative effort developed by Pacific Tsunami Museum and the County of Hawai'i Planning Department with extensive and continual input from a group of supporting partners, a cross-sector collective of government agencies, first responders, business and community groups. This level of participation helped to create a more informed, complete process and mutually beneficial, comprehensive outcomes.

COMMUNITY-BASED RECIPROCAL LEARNING

There are a multitude of resources to educate and prepare people for a tsunami hazard. Instead of developing a tsunami curriculum based on what they thought people 'should know', the project team endeavored to determine what the community 'wanted to learn'. This was conducted through small-group 'talk-story' sessions and a community survey.

The small-group 'talk story' sessions represented an extremely important component of the *Tsunami Project*. The talk story sessions provided the project team an opportunity to

generate community awareness of tsunami hazards and gauge current levels of community knowledge and preparedness. Additionally, the sessions provided an informal and comfortable environment for the public to voice their concerns or raise questions about tsunami hazards.

The Pacific Tsunami Museum developed a survey to gauge public attitudes and their knowledge of tsunami hazards. The survey was administered to Downtown Hilo businesses, residents and talk story participants. Results of the survey added an additional level of data to help focus the project's products.

FOCUSED PROJECT PRODUCTS

Tsunami Education: A Blueprint for Coastal Communities is the main product of the *Tsunami Education, Preparation and Recovery Project for Downtown Hilo*. The 'blueprint' document synthesizes the information, questions, and concerns gathered through the community-based reciprocal learning process and addresses community-raised issues. Additionally, it was designed as a guide to other coastal communities to implement similar hazard education/preparedness projects. The report is available for download from www.tsunami.org.

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