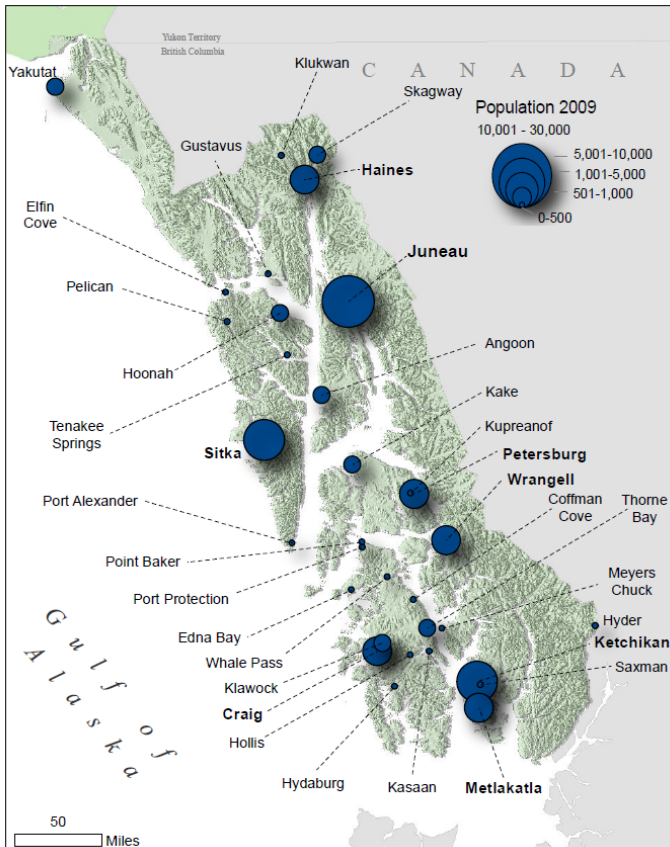


# The Southeast Cluster Initiative

The Juneau Economic Development Council, under a contract with the US Forest Service, is leading a project to create an Economic Development Asset Map and a Strategic Plan for Southeast Alaska, with a focus on actions for strengthening key industry sectors in our region. This project, the Southeast Cluster Initiative, began in early October with work on two deliverables:

1. a Southeast Alaska Asset Map identifying the human, financial, institutional, and natural assets of Southeast Alaska, as well as strategic relationships among assets; and
2. a cluster-based economic development plan for promoting growth in certain key industries in our region.



## About

JEDC is taking a collaborative Cluster Working Group approach to this initiative. **Phase I**, asset mapping, uses Geographic Information System (GIS) technology to present location-specific data on key infrastructure, resources, and business conditions. From the Southeast Alaska Asset Map, clusters will emerge—geographic concentrations of resources, needs, and businesses or firms in a common or related field. **Phase II**, Southeast Alaska Cluster Development, brings together leaders from four to six of these strategic sectors for a series of intensive work sessions, to troubleshoot obstacles and identify opportunities for growth.

JEDC is partnered in this initiative with Southeast Conference, Sheinberg Associates, Alaska Map Company, and consultants Ted Lyman and Brian Kelsey, a collaboration that brings regional, national and world-renowned expertise to the project. The Southeast Cluster Initiative is designed to enlist the experience of Southeast Alaska's committed public and private sector leaders to build an action-oriented framework for sustainable economic growth.

## The Southeast Region

Most of Southeast Alaska's land and resources are within the Tongass National Forest, or adjacent in local waterways, and management of the forest is significant in defining the Southeast economy. The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service has organized listening sessions in Southeast, actively participates in the Tongass Futures Roundtable consortium, and is working in partnership to create a Tongass Transition Framework for Economic Diversification. The Forest Service is also working to secure funding for dozens of projects in the Tongass that support sustainable economic activity, and has issued this contract to develop a Southeast Cluster Initiative to help focus USDA programs and support for sustainable economic development throughout Southeast Alaska.

## Phase I – Asset Mapping

Through December, JEDC is identifying key regional assets, linkages, business attitudes, and the overall business climate. Mapping these assets provides an understanding of the geographic organization of economic clusters of activity and infrastructure, and labor

market needs and resources. Targeted stakeholder input is an important part of this data collection and evaluation. As a result of the Asset Map, four to six strategic economic clusters will emerge as the focus of the second phase of the project, the development of an action-oriented economic development plan strengthening key industry sectors in our region.

### **Phase II – Southeast Alaska Cluster Development**

From January to April 2011, JEDC will assemble public and private industry leaders to create Cluster Working Groups for select established and emerging industry sectors identified in Phase I. JEDC will facilitate the development of a shared economic vision for each cluster, and each will collaboratively develop an actionable roadmap for industry strengthening. JEDC will provide intensive working group facilitation, including sharing of work and feedback among the groups, small-group or task-oriented meetings, and industry experts to develop nascent opportunities and overcome barriers to growth.

This plan will guide the USDA Forest Service and Rural Development in its programs to promote economic development for Southeast Alaska. JEDC believes that a Cluster Working Group approach to regional economic development will serve as a catalyst for private-public partnerships that create better communication and close working relationships. We expect that with the support of JEDC team partner Southeast Conference, the Cluster Working Group approach may continue on after this contract ends and become part of the economic infrastructure of the region.

#### **Asset Categories**

- human capital, including workforce & educational institutions
- research and development institutions or capacities
- organizations that support & provide connections between entities
- the legal and regulatory environment
- physical infrastructure
- financial capital
- the industrial and resource base
- quality of life

### **Involvement & Information**

- Throughout November, over 300 regional business and civic leaders participated in our web-based **Regional Business Climate Survey** through [JEDC.org](http://JEDC.org). The survey gathered valuable input for understanding and, eventually, improving the region's business climate.
- Visit [JEDC.org](http://JEDC.org) any time for the most recent information on the Southeast Cluster Initiative.

### **Partner Profiles**

#### **Juneau Economic Development Council** [JEDC.org](http://JEDC.org)

JEDC works to foster a healthy and sustainable economic climate in Juneau and Southeast Alaska. A local resource since 1987, JEDC maintains a staff of economic development specialists with knowledge of regional economic development issues & experience in long-term planning efforts.

#### **Southeast Conference** [seconference.org](http://seconference.org)

Southeast Conference is a regional nonprofit corporation that advances the collective interest of the people, communities & businesses in Southeast Alaska. Members include municipalities, native corporations and village councils, businesses, civic organizations and individuals throughout the region.

#### **Sheinberg Associates** [sheinbergassociates.com](http://sheinbergassociates.com)

Barbara J. Sheinberg is firm principal, senior planner & facilitator. She is a certified planner with 27 years of experience specializing in strategic & community planning & facilitation of meetings. Ms. Sheinberg has worked with most communities in Southeast Alaska on a wide variety of planning & analysis efforts.

#### **Alaska Map Company** [akmapco.com](http://akmapco.com)

Alaska Map Company is a Kenai Peninsula based GIS consulting firm & key contributor in Geospatial Mapping Projects throughout Alaska for the past nine years. Gary Greenberg, owner & senior GIS Analyst, specializes in supporting small & remote Alaska communities with high-quality, low-cost GIS consulting.

#### **Theodore R. Lyman**

Mr. Lyman brings over 30 years of experience, nearly all in assisting public & private sector leaders with action initiatives to enhance economic development. His global experience has earned Mr. Lyman acclaim as one of the world's experts in development & implementation of cluster-based strategies for enhancing regional competitiveness.

#### **Brian Kelsey** [civicanalytics.com](http://civicanalytics.com)

Brian Kelsey specializes in research & strategic planning for economic development, workforce development, & private sector projects. Mr. Kelsey has served as Director of Economic Development at the Capital Area Council of Governments in Austin, Texas, for a region of 1.8 million people. He is co-author of *Measuring Regional Innovation*.