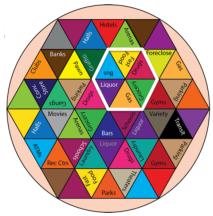# Risk Management and RTM in ACTION
By Joel Caplan and Leslie Kennedy

Risk terrain modeling is one part of a larger risk management agenda that operationalizes and measures problems; suggests ways in which they can be addressed through interventions; proposes measures for assessing effectiveness of treatment and sustainability of efforts; and offers suggestions for how police organizations can be reconstituted as risk management agencies that address vulnerabilities and exposures in the communities that they serve through strategies that go beyond specific deterrence of offenders.

Standard patterns of crime cannot be expected across study settings. Think about this through the analogy of a **kaleidoscope** that represents the particular environment, or setting, that we are interested in studying (see Figure). The shards of different colors represent features of that environment, such as bars, fast food restaurants, grocery stores, etc. that may attract illegal behavior and create spatial vulnerabilities. Just as we see different patterns emerge as we turn a kaleidoscope, these factors combine in unique spatial and situational contexts that have implications for behavior at those places as we move from place to place.

Mindful of the kaleidoscope metaphor, it is not safe to assume that a "standard" response to crime problems will provide similar returns across all environments. This is true for areas within jurisdictions and also across jurisdictions. So one crime problem, such as robberies, will not necessarily respond to a "one-size-fits-all" intervention strategy (even if the strategy worked elsewhere). Behavior settings differ, so interventions need to be tailored accordingly. **RTM** produces unique information products that provide **direct decision-support for place-based interventions**.

To achieve consistency in our own applications of RTM across various jurisdictions, we begin by conversing with key stakeholders to **isolate the specific problem to be addressed**. Crime is often the focus for police agencies, so we begin with identifying a priority crime type. Then our assessment of the spatial dynamics of the priority crime type begins not with the statistical tests of RTM, but with an **appraisal of the risk narrative** as perceived by stakeholders within the jurisdiction. We meet with police officials and other parties to learn how <u>they</u> understand the problem and related event contexts. We listen and ask questions to gain insights that will ground our methods in the nuanced social, cultural, economic, and political atmospheres within which the priority crime type is happening.

This grounded approach helps us begin to identify data sets and connect potential risk factors and their spatial influences to outcome events. And, it begins the process of **task management**, whereby we discuss the feasibility of and responsibilities of all parties to perform tasks to collect data and utilize spatial intel given known constraints and existing strengths of human capital and other resources. Following these initial meetings we **analyze data and produce reports** for intervention planning. RTM methods come into play at this point. An intervention planning intel report, or IPIR, is reviewed with stakeholders in an atmosphere conducive to interpreting results with perspective on event context and the social relevancies of risk factors. Following the planning and implementation of intervention activities, we **evaluate outcomes and notify stakeholders** and the general public about what was done, why, and the sustainability of efforts used to achieve results.

This pragmatic focus on **Assessment, Connections, Tasks, Interventions, Outcomes and Notifications forms our ACTION plan** that we apply consistently across projects. Meaningful and actionable information is best achieved within this larger risk management agenda.

Overview of the ACTION Plan

A	**Assessment of the Risk Narrative**: A spoken or written account of connected events.
C	**Making Connections**: What attracts illegal behavior to high-crime areas and why do crimes cluster there over time?
T	**Task Management**: Decide the feasibility and responsibilities for performing tasks to collect data, perform analyses, and respond to information and spatial intel.
I	**Intervention Planning and Implementation**: Intervention Planning Intel Report (IPIR) presents spatial analyses to develop interventions. The IPIR's main purpose is to outline the ways in which the problem under study occurs in the study setting, and the factors that are important in elevating risks of it continuing.
O	**Outcome Evaluation**: Measure not only changes in crime counts, but also changes in the spatial patterns of crime occurrence. Also consider diffusion of benefits and assess whether crime displacement occurred (e.g., to high risk places, or elsewhere). Establish whether proper procedures have been implemented.
N	**Notifying Others**: This is the people-oriented aspect of risk reduction strategies; involves communicating information. Utilize technology, media outlets, and personal communications to share key information about risk management efforts with a variety of stakeholder populations.