**Proposal by the Planning Emeritus Network (PEN)**

**To Establish a CPAT Program Under the Auspices of APA California**

December 3, 2015

At its meeting of October 4, 2015, in Oakland, the Planners Emeritus Network (PEN) voted to ask the APA California Board in January 2016 to initiate a Community Planning Assistance Team (CPAT) program for California and Baja California. If the Board agrees, the officers of PEN are prepared to do all the groundwork and to initially administer the program. The California Chapter need only endorse it and publicize it; no significant expenditures are required.

APA National has had a CPAT program since 1995. About 28 projects have been undertaken, wherein APA members have volunteered their time and talents to assist a local community or neighborhood group in dealing with a planning issue for which they have not sufficient resources to address themselves. Projects are typically two or three days long with a team of four or five volunteer planners; all direct costs are covered by the community being served. CPATs have prepared small downtown plans, parks and trails studies, economic development strategies, and many more.

Three APA Chapters have initiated similar programs at the local level. The Illinois Chapter has a Pro-Bono Planning Service Program “to provide planning services to assist eligible non-profit organizations, community groups, service agencies, and governmental units in the initiation, organizing, and fine-tuning of early stage planning projects.” The Washington State Chapter launched Community Planning Assistance Teams in 2001, and prepared a Community Design and Planning Handbook, “to provide community design assistance to underserved towns and communities.” The New Jersey Chapter has also recently initiated a CPAT program.

Robert Paternoster, FAICP, PEN Vice President, has served in National’s CPAT program, and is prepared to lead the effort here in California. PEN members, with their many years of professional experience, are anxious to join a pool of California Chapter members who are willing to offer limited pro-bono planning services to needy community organizations.

If the APA California Board concurs, PEN will write a program description for the Chapter website, prepare the application form for communities in need of planning services, and prepare the form for professional planners to submit to volunteer their services. The Board will need to publicize the program through *CalPlanner*, an e-mail to all members, and any other means at its disposal. PEN will email its Board membership. The most difficult aspect of launching such a program is to make community groups aware of its existence. To accomplish this, we suggest that Board members of the Chapter and of PEN personally “talk up” the program among their associates and local towns and organizations, and that Section Directors search out potential candidates within their jurisdiction. San Diego Section members can also spread the word to their colleagues in nearby Baja California.

Stan Hoffman, PEN President, and Bob Paternoster, PEN Vice President, will attend the APA California Board retreat and meeting in Southern California on January 16 to make a very brief presentation and to discuss the potential of the program. We hope that the Board will support this proposal by PEN and establish a CPAT program here in California under the auspices of APA California.