

# California State Senate

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SENATOR  
**JESSE ARREGUÍN**  
SEVENTH SENATE DISTRICT



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March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2026

Darnell Grisby  
Chair, California Transportation Commission  
1120 N Street  
Sacramento, CA 85814

**Re: Advance the State Route 123 CAPM Project ID 0419000452 Without Delay**

Dear Chair Grisby:

We respectfully request that the State Route 123 Pavement Rehabilitation Project in Contra Costa County (Caltrans Project ID 0419000452, EA 0AA21, SHOPP ID 20698), proceed as originally scheduled, with construction starting in Summer 2026. Alternatively, we request that it be designated as a public safety improvement to ensure it is eligible for expedited action. The project includes critical safety features: two flashing crosswalk beacons, safety lighting at up to 11 intersections, high-visibility signs and markings at all intersections, and narrower lane markings corridor-wide.

In January 2026, Caltrans staff informed the City of El Cerrito that due to funding shortfalls in the 2026 SHOPP, the project would be reprogrammed to FY 2027/2028, **delaying the project up to two years** due to its categorization as a pavement maintenance project, and that Caltrans would prioritize bridge, intelligent transportation systems, and reactive safety projects with the available resources.

While the project is primarily a pavement maintenance project, the City strongly believes this project also constitutes a critical public safety improvement along a corridor where there have already been injuries and loss of life. **Two pedestrians have been killed by motorists, the most recent of which was in November of 2025, each at locations that have been identified as locations for safety upgrades.** The City voiced these concerns directly to the California Transportation Commission (CTC) at their February 12 meeting during public comment.

The California Transportation Commission is scheduled to adopt the 2026 SHOPP reprogramming at its March 19, 2026 meeting, which would delay this project and risk preventable injuries and loss of life. Advancing the project as currently scheduled would address an urgent public safety need and support the state's housing and climate goals by helping ensure the safe and successful growth of a key infill corridor in the Bay Area.

State Route 123, also known as San Pablo Avenue for most of its length, serves as the central spine of El Cerrito and is the focal point of significant infill development. In 2014, the City adopted the groundbreaking San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan, which integrated land use and transportation planning along the corridor, calling for new infill development and transforming San Pablo Avenue into a complete street designed to provide safe travel for all modes. The corridor is also a designated Priority Development Area in the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's Plan Bay Area 2050, the Bay Area's Sustainable Communities Strategy and Regional Transportation Plan.

The corridor is undergoing rapid transformation, with more than 1,600 new homes entitled, including a 743-unit redevelopment underway at the nearby El Cerrito Plaza BART station, nearly half of which will be below market rate. The El Cerrito Plaza Transit Oriented Development project is the first project approved under AB 2923 (2018), which established transit-oriented development zoning standards for BART-owned land near stations.

This level of growth requires a corresponding state commitment to safety and mobility, particularly along a corridor that is increasingly used by pedestrians and transit riders and identified as a Safety Priority Location in Contra Costa Transportation Authority's Vision Zero Action Plan.

Consistent with state and local Complete Streets policies, which call for all project types to improve conditions for all modes of travel, City and Caltrans District 4 staff have worked collaboratively over the past three years to incorporate meaningful safety enhancements into the project, including:

- **Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons** at two existing marked, uncontrolled crosswalks
- **Safety Lighting** at up to eleven intersections along the corridor
- **High-Visibility Signs and Markings** at all intersections and crosswalks
- **Narrower lane** markings corridor-wide to encourage slower speeds

Caltrans staff also proposed a follow-up safety project for 2031 that would upgrade or install new crosswalks at eight locations. However, the foundational improvements within this CAPM project are necessary to improve conditions along the corridor now and must be completed before more comprehensive safety upgrades can proceed.

For these reasons, we strongly urge you to support the City's request that Caltrans move forward with the project as originally scheduled. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Jesse Arreguin  
California State Senate, District 7



Buffy Wicks  
California State Assembly, District 14

CC: Clarissa Reyes Falcon, Vice Chair, California Transportation Commission  
Jay Bradshaw, Commissioner, California Transportation Commission  
Paulette Brown-Hinds, PhD, Commissioner, California Transportation Commission  
Joseph Cruz, Commissioner, California Transportation Commission  
Lee Ann Eager, Commissioner, California Transportation Commission  
Jason Elliott, Commissioner, California Transportation Commission  
Carl Guardino, Commissioner, California Transportation Commission  
Adonia Lugo, PhD, Commissioner, California Transportation Commission  
Zahirah Mann, Commissioner, California Transportation Commission  
Bob Tiffany, Commissioner, California Transportation Commission  
Tanisha Taylor, Executive Director, California Transportation Commission  
The Honorable Senator Dave Cortese, Ex Officio Member, California Transportation  
Commission  
The Honorable Assemblymember Lori Wilson, Ex Officio Member, California  
Transportation Commission  
Dina El-Tawansy, Executive Director, Caltrans  
David Ambuehl, Acting District 4 Director, Caltrans

**From:** [Pray, Jon J@CATC](mailto:Pray_Jon_J@CATC)  
**To:** [Pray, Jon J@CATC](mailto:Pray_Jon_J@CATC)  
**Subject:** FW: DO NOT delay Caltrans repaving project in El Cerrito  
**Date:** Friday, March 13, 2026 9:34:27 AM

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**From:** Lucas Cantor <[lucas@cantor.cloud](mailto:lucas@cantor.cloud)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 12, 2026 3:03 PM  
**To:** Taylor, Tanisha@CATC <[Tanisha.Taylor@catc.ca.gov](mailto:Tanisha.Taylor@catc.ca.gov)>  
**Subject:** DO NOT delay Caltrans repaving project in El Cerrito

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To the California Transportation Commission:

Due to State Highway Operation and Protection Program (SHOPP) funding shortfalls, Caltrans is proposing to reprogram the State Route 123 (SR-123) Pavement Rehabilitation Project to Fiscal Year 2027-2028, which would delay the start of construction from Summer 2026 to February 2028. El Cerrito has negotiated urgent safety improvements as part of the repaving project.

Since the start of the project planning and design phase, there have been two pedestrian fatalities along SR-123 in El Cerrito, making the need for the critical safety features all the more urgent.

San Pablo Avenue functions as both a state highway and the primary commercial and pedestrian corridor for a dense, transit-dependent community. Residents without cars, especially seniors, low-income families, students, all rely on this street daily to reach bus stops, schools, and essential services. Yet the corridor lacks adequate crosswalk visibility, continuous sidewalks, and safe pedestrian infrastructure at key intersections.

The two fatalities since project planning began are not anomalies; they are the predictable consequence of deferring known safety deficiencies on a high-volume urban arterial. Every additional month of delay is a month in which the next fatality becomes more likely. A repaving project that does not address these conditions will simply repave a dangerous road.

The safety improvements negotiated by El Cerrito, i.e., lighting, crosswalk upgrades,

curb ramp compliance, are inseparable from the pavement work and cannot be efficiently delivered through any other funding mechanism or timeline. Delay to FY 2027-2028 is not a fiscal deferral; it is a decision to accept preventable harm to the most vulnerable users of this corridor.

Project 0AA21 is not just a maintenance project and should not be delayed. It should break ground in Summer 2026 as originally planned. Please fund this critical project without delay.

Best regards,  
Lucas Cantor (Berkeley, CA)

Sent with [Proton Mail](#) secure email.