

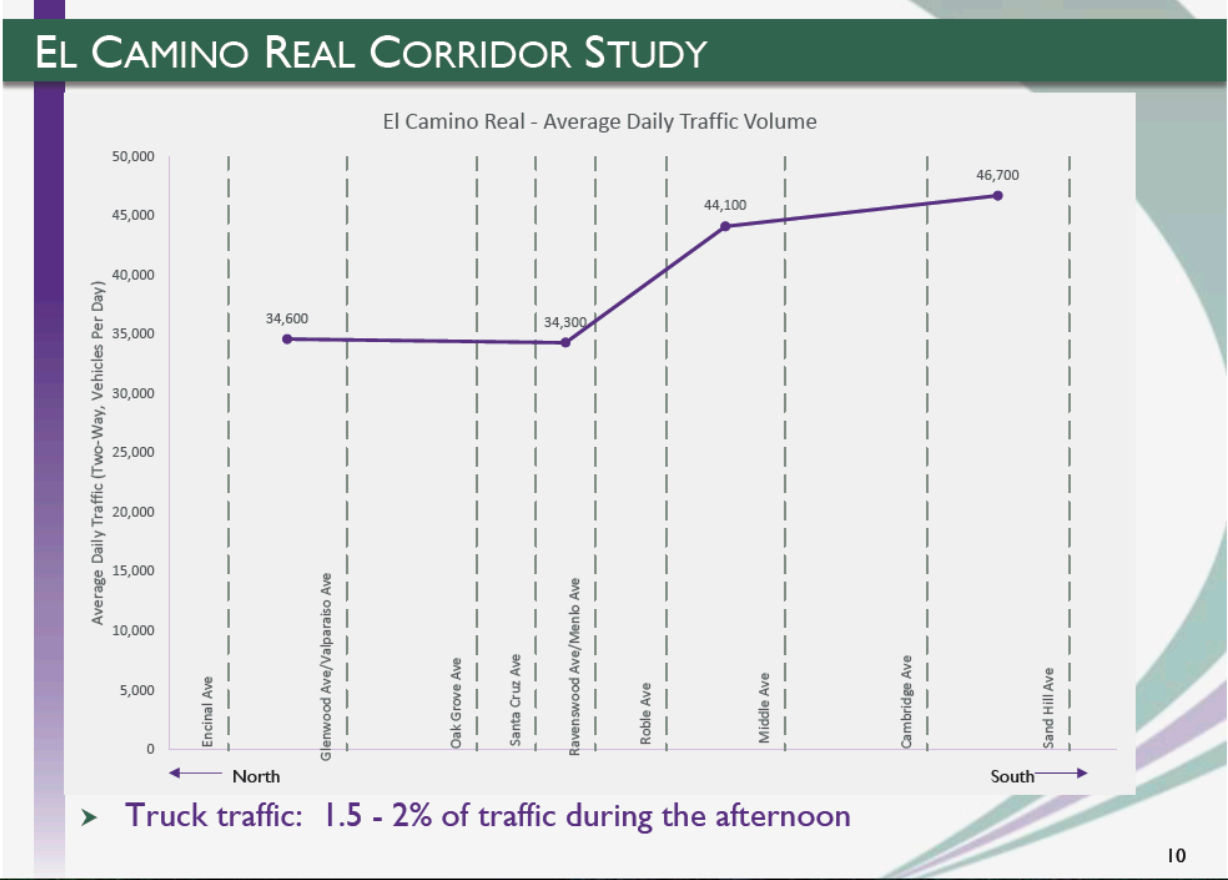
It's Time To Eliminate Unnecessary Vehicle Traffic From El Camino Real In Menlo Park



“After three decades of lobbying, negotiation, and litigation, the (Sand Hill) road was finally completed to El Camino Real in 2001. Only the existing portion from just north of Alameda de las Pulgas to just south of Stanford Shopping Center was widened to four lanes; the new extension past the shopping center was built only as two lanes.” – [Wikipedia](#)

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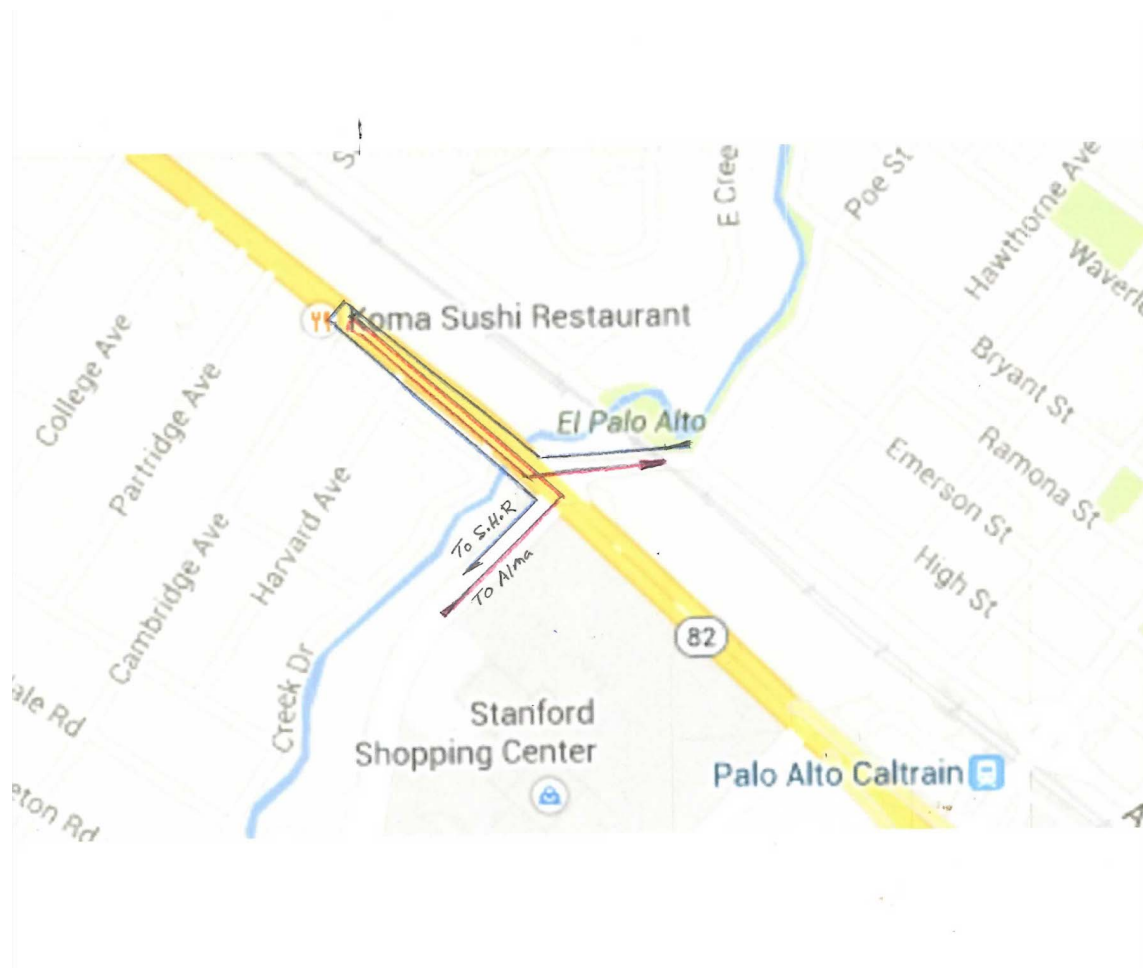
Vehicle traffic on Menlo Park’s stretch of El Camino Real has grown rapidly since the creation of its Specific Plan. **About 35,000 cars a day traverse the north end between Ravenswood Avenue and Atherton and more than 44,000 cars a day travel on the south end.**



What’s Wrong With The Current Intersection At Sand Hill And El Camino Real

The traffic circulation section of the Specific Plan never considered the impact of the major El Camino Real intersection that lies just south of the Menlo Park-Palo Alto border. This Sand Hill Road connection is adjacent to the north end of the Stanford Shopping Center. This omission is significant as the existing configuration of this intersection UNNECESSARILY forces Palo Alto (Alma) traffic bound for Sand Hill Road and Sand Hill Road traffic bound for Alma to travel twice (a) through the intersection and (b) on El Camino Real. Effectively, the u-turn at Cambridge Avenue and a short length of El Camino Real are parts of an artificial traffic loop. Also, the traffic coming from Alma must cross multiple lanes of ECR to reach the left turn at Cambridge, and at peak traffic times this can be extremely unsafe and difficult. If a westbound driver either cannot safely reach this left turn or the left turn line is too long, she likely continues and either makes a u-turn back to Sand Hill at Middle Ave OR turns left and travels west on Oak to reach Sand Hill Road. **This configuration contributes significantly to current Menlo**

Park traffic congestion on a stretch of El Camino that is expected to carry much more when the 500 ECR and 1300 developments are completed.



This connection was controversial when built, and it will become a much bigger problem when Stanford completes its development at 500 ECR in Menlo Park. Palo Alto fought against a direct connection between Alma and Sand Hill, and Caltrans yielded to its demands. While Menlo Park clearly had skin in the game it lacked any authority to stop this decision. Why Caltrans accepted this odd solution remains a mystery to me. There is substantial traffic flowing through this intersection. **I estimate about 2700 vehicles per day based on the traffic volumes provided in the ECR Corridor Study.** (The difference between the traffic at Sand Hill Road and Middle Avenue which likely represents vehicles reversing direction at Cambridge Avenue.)

What Menlo Park Should Do About This Problem

Since Stanford must perform a project-level Environmental Impact Report for 500 ECR, Menlo Park should require Stanford to compare the expected impact of the current configuration versus a direct connection between Alma and Sand Hill Road. It should also require Stanford to study the impact of making the narrow two-lane section of Sand Hill Road between El Camino and Arboretum four lanes wide.