



# CRESCENTA VALLEY TOWN COUNCIL

April 10, 2026

Supervisor Kathryn Barger  
500 W. Temple Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Supervisor Barger,

Jeffrey Rodriguez  
President

Daniel Kim  
Vice President

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Treasurer

Kerri Lewin Bräutigam  
Corresponding Secretary

## COUNCIL MEMBERS

Frida Baghdassarian

Chris Kilpatrick

Harry Leon

Dede Mueller

Crescenta Valley Town Council has deep concern regarding Abode's multi story, high-density development in the Crescenta Valley at the intersection of Briggs Avenue and Foothill Boulevard without corresponding improvements to evacuation capacity, traffic flow, or emergency access. The current conditions already place residents, students, and first responders at significant risk. Adding more population to this constrained network without addressing these deficiencies is unsafe and unsustainable.

Briggs Terrace is a small, mountainous, isolated foothill neighborhood with **only one road in and one road out**. The neighborhood consists of 17 narrow winding residential streets and approximately 316 homes, developed prior to modern fire-access and evacuation standards. This geography alone creates elevated risk and the area is designated a **Very High Fire Severity Zone**.

The lower portion of Briggs between Foothill and Shields Avenue consists of an additional approximate 320 homes.

These figures do not include any ADU's or sub properties which would increase the number of residents needing to evacuate.

During the 2009 Station Fire residents were evacuated twice. Any stalled vehicle, accident, construction activity, or fallen tree could have blocked the sole access point trapping residents and preventing emergency vehicles from entering. The entire east side of Briggs Avenue is a canyon with no possible evacuation route.

Compounding this vulnerability, Briggs Avenue serves several critical community facilities.

- **Mountain Avenue Elementary School**, located on a dead-end street, has approximately 600 students and 30 staff who must all evacuate onto Briggs Avenue.
- **Rosemont Middle School**, just west of Briggs, adds roughly 730 students and 30 staff to the same limited network.
- **Monte Vista Elementary**, farther up the hill, with approximately 780 students and staff, contributes additional daily traffic and potential evacuation demand.
- The **Crescenta Valley Sheriff's Station** also exits directly onto Briggs Avenue, meaning congestion directly affects law-enforcement response times.

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On a normal school day, these facilities generate hundreds of additional vehicle trips on Briggs, Rosemont, La Crescenta Avenues, and surrounding streets. In an emergency during school hours, parents rushing to reach their children would overwhelm these roads creating gridlock at the exact moment when rapid evacuation is essential.

Recent events have shown how fragile this system already is. Foothill Boulevard was brought to a crawl with a semi-truck fire on the 210 Freeway eastbound at La Tuna Canyon Road. This incident backed up traffic into Pasadena and major north-south streets including Briggs, Rosemont, La Crescenta, and Ramsdell; all at a complete standstill. Parallel streets such as Orange, Altura, Montrose, and Honolulu were also gridlocked. This occurred without a true emergency. Had this been a wildfire or earthquake the consequences could have been catastrophic. Emergency vehicles would have struggled to move and residents could have been trapped as in the Palisades and Eaton fires.

Despite these realities, the State continues to push for increased high-density housing in the valley, including the proposed **4 - 5 story Abode apartment building** at Briggs and Foothill. This project alone could add approximately **300-350 residents and 150+ vehicles** to the chokepoint of the only evacuation route. With onsite parking for only 80 cars, overflow vehicles would spill onto Foothill Boulevard and lower Briggs further constricting movement. The building's only exit is going west onto Foothill Boulevard, meaning evacuation traffic may be forced to stop to allow apartment residents to exit thereby slowing evacuation for the entire community and hindering first responders. The parking deficit for the proposed development creates a situation where residents may be running to vehicles parked far away so that they themselves can evacuate and those additional vehicles parked on the already narrow streets effectively shrinks the escape pipe for EVERY resident living North of the project. Pedestrians vs. vehicles in a high stress and possibly smoke -filled situation creates a recipe for tragedy. An approval of such a high -density project by the County is consenting to the obstruction of a dedicated evacuation route.

A single-access foothill community with extreme fire risk, three schools, a sheriff's station, and no alternative evacuation routes **cannot safely absorb high-density development**. Our infrastructure is already overburdened. Adding more residents without meaningful improvements to road capacity, evacuation planning, and emergency access places lives at risk.

We respectfully urge the County to require:

- **Comprehensive traffic impact studies**
- **Evacuation modeling and emergency access analysis**
- **Consideration of fire-safety exemptions and reduced-density allowances**
- **Infrastructure improvements prior to approving additional high-density projects**

Public safety must come before State development mandates. Just because it's mandated, it does not mean it is appropriate for all communities. Crescenta Valley residents are not opposed to responsible planning within our community standards, we are asking for planning that acknowledges the real, documented constraints of our geography and infrastructure.

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Thank you for your attention to this critical matter. CVTC urges you to prioritize the safety of our community and ensure that any future development decisions reflect the unique risks faced by the Briggs corridor and the surrounding foothill neighborhoods.

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dede Mueller".

Dede Mueller  
Crescenta Valley Town Council, Streets and Roads Committee Chair

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## Briggs Terrace Evacuation & Emergency Access Risk Summary

### Neighborhood Overview

Briggs Terrace is a small, older hillside neighborhood located approximately 1.4 miles North of Foothill Blvd. The last home is approximately 2.5 miles North of Foothill Blvd. The streets in Briggs Terrace are steep, winding, narrow, and dark.

The neighborhood to the East of Briggs between Foothill Blvd. and Shields consists of 18 cul de sac streets with the only access road being Briggs Avenue.

The Briggs community, as is the majority of Unincorporated La Crescenta, situated within a Very High Fire Severity Zone (VHFSZ) and has a documented history of evacuation; The Mt. Lukens Fire, The Mill Fire, The Station Fire and most recently the Eaton Fire. Residents were in the get ready to go stage for several days. The reality of living within the footprint of a VHFSZ is not a matter of how many times an evacuation order has occurred but of WHEN an evacuation order will occur. Living on the edge of a known burn scar leaves residents on high alert indefinitely.

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### Access & Evacuation Constraints

Briggs corridor is served by a single access roadway, Briggs Avenue.

- The entire east side of Briggs Avenue is bordered by a canyon (Sutton Canyon and Pickens Canyon channel and debris basin)
- There is no physical ability to evacuate eastward
- No secondary access roads or emergency egress routes exist
- All residents must evacuate southbound onto Briggs Avenue toward Foothill Boulevard

As documented, Briggs corridor has only one road in and one road out, creating a single-access, single-direction evacuation condition with no redundancy.

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## Population & Vehicle Demand (2025 Voter Roll) and Title Map Search

Using the 2025 voter roll and a title map search as a conservative proxy for residents:

- Approximately 666 properties in Briggs Terrace and the East portion of Briggs between Foothill and Shields
- 1998 residents estimating 3 people per household
- Assuming 1.8 cars per household
- Results of approximately 1198 vehicles

In a wildfire evacuation, these vehicles would attempt to leave at the same time, particularly under wind-driven or fast-moving fire conditions and extreme conditions of possible smoke and low visibility and in most instances if at night without power for street lights.

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## Evacuation Queue Length & Roadway Capacity

Using conservative vehicle spacing:

- Average vehicle plus spacing: ~20–25 feet
- 1198 vehicles = approximately 23,960 – 29,950 feet of queued traffic
- Equivalent to 4.5 – 5.67 miles of continuous vehicle queue

Because Briggs Terrace is only ~1.4 miles from Foothill Boulevard, evacuation demand exceeds available roadway capacity by approximately 3 times.

This means:

- Vehicles would remain trapped within the neighborhood
- Some residents may not be even able to pull out of their driveways due to the queue of cars
- Congestion would back up beyond Foothill Boulevard all the way to the 210 Freeway
- Evacuation clearance (TIME TO CLEAR) could not be completed before fire arrival in rapid spread scenarios i.e.: Palisades and Eaton fires

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## Emergency Response Conflict

During a wildfire event:

- Residents must evacuate southbound
- Fire engines, water tenders, and command vehicles must respond northbound
- Both evacuation and response traffic are forced onto the same narrow, winding roadway

Documented conditions indicate that any stalled vehicle, collision, debris, or fallen tree can completely block Briggs Avenue, simultaneously preventing:

- Civilian evacuation
- Fire Department access

Fire apparatus has limited ability to bypass, turn around, or reverse under these conditions.

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## Risk Conclusion

Briggs corridor presents a high-consequence life-safety risk characterized by:

- Single access point
- Single evacuation direction
- Vehicle demand exceeding roadway capacity
- Direct conflict between evacuation and emergency response
- No redundancy or tolerance for blockage or delay

This estimate does not include:

- Minors, elderly, visitors or service providers
- Emergency personnel
- School-related traffic on Briggs Avenue

This is a structural evacuation deficiency, not a behavioral issue, and must be considered in emergency planning, fire operations, and land-use decisions affecting Briggs Avenue and Foothill Boulevard. The entire overview of the Unincorporated La Crescenta community North of Foothill lacks adequate road infrastructure on most streets to accommodate a mass exodus. Residents are owed safety measures put in place by the County and the State. Overbuilding and oversaturating a community in a VHFSZ is a fundamental duty being willfully ignored in favor of development density and it effectively trades the life-safety of current families for a calculated liability.

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