

FROM:



**BROOKLINE COMMUNITY AGING NETWORK
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For immediate release, please

MBTA CUTS IMPACT SENIORS. FORUM AT SENIOR CENTER

Because proposed MBTA fare increases and cuts to service will significantly impact older people and those with disabilities, BrooklineCAN (Brookline Community Aging Network) and the Brookline Council on Aging will host a public forum at the Brookline Senior Center, 93 Winchester Street, on Monday, March 5, 2012, at 1:00 pm.

Brookline has a sizeable population of elders and people with disabilities, with 12% of Brookline residents over the age of 65. Frank Caro, co-founder and chair of BrooklineCAN's Livable Community committee, notes, "Transportation is one of the most important factors for older people to remain independent, meet the obligations of daily life, and avoid becoming isolated."

He adds, "Older people live in Brookline for many reasons, including the ability to get around without a car. Elders and people with disabilities rely on public transport to a greater extent than the general public. Older people are being singled out for dramatic increases in fares. In its proposal emphasizing fare increases, the MBTA proposes an increase of 175% for seniors compared to an increase of 40% for other adults. The proposed cuts will be devastating to the many older people who live on fixed incomes. The MBTA has provided no rationale for placing a much greater burden on older riders." In addition, he notes, the MBTA proposes not only to increase fares for seniors but also for the RIDE and to restrict eligibility through a more severe screening process. The RIDE provides door-to-door service to 62 cities and towns in lift-equipped vehicles for eligible customers who cannot use subways, buses, or trains due to a physical, mental, or cognitive disability.

Budget and policy analyst for the MBTA Advisory Board Brian Kane and local legislators will attend the forum. Kane is not an employee of the MBTA. BrooklineCAN encourages anyone concerned about public transportation availability in Brookline to attend this forum. You may also send your comments to fareproposal@mbta.com by March 1.

The primary goal of BrooklineCAN is to help make Brookline an even better place to live for people of all ages. The volunteer organization, launched last April, also aims to help elders remain in their homes and to continue to be active participants in the community. In less than a year, BrooklineCAN has enrolled nearly 350 members.

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