



electcarlos.com

carlos 
RIDRUEJO SELECT BOARD

JOIN ME FOR
THE CAMPAIGN
LAUNCH PARTY!
**THE WASHINGTON
SQUARE TAVERN**
MARCH 16
12-2PM

Hello, my name is Carlos Ridruejo.

I wanted to thank BrooklineCAN and the Livable Communities Advocacy Committee for the opportunity to introduce myself to one of the most important groups of residents in Brookline.

Today, **residents 60 years old or older, make up 20 percent of our town population, yet many feel that they are not listened to or their views taken into account when decisions are made at in town government.** The Select Board needs to change that perception.

As our older population percentage increases, the Select Board should be doing everything they can to increase the operating budget proportionally, yet the reality is that the proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2025 for the Council on Aging is actually being reduced by 2% compared to Fiscal Year 2024. When you consider that the \$1,246,576 budget for FY25 is only 0.29% of the Town's overall budget, it is clear that there is much room for improvement.

Brookline's senior residents face many challenges that need to be addressed. **Rising property taxes or rental costs pressures, transportation options in a town that seems to be continually shrinking senior friendly parking, pedestrian friendly routes and gathering areas, food insecurity and social isolation** are all real issues in our town.

One of the most important assets the town has is the BCA/Senior Center. For this reason, there needs to be adequate funding as the town currently funds only 65-70% of the annual budget. Many essential programs, including transportation, food insecurity initiatives, technology support, and efforts to combat social isolation, rely on ARPA funding, which is set to expire in December 2026. This needs to be resolved by the Select Board.

The Senior Center is also facing space constraints, with its current facility at full capacity. There is potential for a 5,000-square-foot expansion at 108 Centre Street, which could be utilized for creative arts programs and a social daycare program. Additionally, there is a need for more programs catering to South Brookline residents. An existing town property in south Brookline or at the former Newbury College could serve, in part, as a satellite of the center.

Sustained funding for transportation services is another critical issue, as reliable transportation remains essential for older adults to access necessary services and maintain social connections. As a town, we also need to foster more employment opportunities for older adults as more Americans aged 65 and older are working full-time. Creating these job opportunities, and options for seniors to come together, must include evening activities or extended hours.

The Select Board must also consider the reality that most of our older population is living on a fixed income, **so the financial pressures are very real** when property taxes and overrides are approved. For those seniors who rent, rising property taxes translates to higher rental costs, and an increase in evictions.

As the town promotes new mobility plans, the Select Board must **listen to the real concerns seniors have about pedestrian safety**, with a need for sidewalk repairs, improved street lighting, and more benches to support mobility and accessibility for older residents. These concerns also include the reduction in available parking spaces in business districts, creating additional difficulties.

I also believe that the **Select Board must increase the voice at of the senior community in our government**. Through the recruitment of older adults to serve on boards and commissions, we will provide valuable experience and insights in decision-making processes.

I look forward to working for a better and more inclusive Brookline, one in which our seniors can feel more welcomed and feel less financial pressures.

Thank you for your consideration,

Carlos Ridruejo

About me. I immigrated to the United States to pursue architecture studies, earning a Bachelor of Architecture from Cornell and a Master of Architecture from MIT. After graduate school, I met my wife, Alisa Kahn, and in 2005, we chose Brookline as the ideal place to raise our family. Our son currently attends the Runkle School, where we actively participate in PTO fundraising activities.

With extensive experience working for award-winning architecture and planning firms, I later founded my own multidisciplinary practice specializing in architecture, graphic design, and brand development. My architectural work has been published in design magazines, and many of my clients are local nonprofits and community leaders. I have always been an active volunteer, but my commitment to Brookline deepened after becoming a U.S. citizen in 2016, fueling my passion for civic engagement.

In 2019, I was appointed to Brookline's Advisory Committee, the fiscal advisory body to Town Meeting, where my expertise as a registered architect and LEED-accredited professional has been highly valued. I have served on the Land Use, Zoning, and Sustainability Subcommittee and the Capital Subcommittee, reviewing budgets for key town departments and contributing to the Capital Improvement Program. Over the past six years, I have served on multiple advisory, review, and selection committees, further strengthening my relationships with Town Hall staff and deepening my understanding of municipal government.