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Press Release

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Weymouth library receives grant with three South Shore towns to bring shared reading experience to Greenbush riders

The "One Train, One Book" initiative aims to connect commuters with libraries services in Cohasset, Hingham, Scituate, and Weymouth starting next spring.

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Weymouth, MA – The Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) recently awarded a \$21,375 Innovation Program grant to a coalition of four South Shore libraries, including Weymouth's, which seek to connect Greenbush commuter rail passengers to local library services through the reading and discussion of a common book – Doug Most's *The Race Underground: Boston, New York, and the Incredible Rivalry that Built America's First Subway*.

The "All Aboard, Greenbush!: One Train, One Book" initiative represents a regional effort to bring library services directly to time-strapped commuters. It also exemplifies new and innovative ways that local libraries are using nontraditional techniques to involve large audiences in books and dialogue.

"The MBLC created the Innovation Program to give libraries the opportunity to go beyond traditional library services. The libraries involved in the 'All Aboard, Greenbush!: One Train, One Book' project have done that in a spectacular way that fits well into today's busy lifestyle," **said MBLC Director Dianne Carty**. "Residents can enjoy the program now, but because they will have learned how easy it is to access library eBooks, audiobooks, and other digital material, they will continue to benefit even after the project ends."

Weymouth is one of four libraries participating in the initiative alongside Cohasset, Hingham, and Scituate – all communities serviced by the MBTA Greenbush line. In fiscal year 2015, the four libraries collectively circulated print and digital materials over 1.06 *million* times, or nearly 11 times per resident across the four communities. Seeking to reach new populations, these libraries have teamed up to bring services directly to people on the go. Their target audience – the nearly 3,000 passengers who board the Greenbush line on an average weekday.

According to the libraries' MBLC grant application, studies show that long commutes have a negative effect on people's satisfaction with life as well as their involvement in community affairs. Challenging work schedules and family obligations further combine to hinder people's connection with their communities. Cohasset, Hingham, Scituate, and Weymouth seek to encourage greater connection among commuters by enriching the commuting experience. In collaboration with the MBTA, author Doug Most, and the Cohasset Historical Society, the four libraries will introduce commuter rail passengers across all Greenbush communities to the extensive digital and print resources available through their local libraries.

The One Train, One Book initiative will kick off next spring (2017) with the book *The Race Underground* distributed at Greenbush stations across the four communities. Copies of the book will be made available in print, e-book, and e-audiobook format, and staff librarians will be on-site to sign commuters up with their own library cards. Specific dates will be chosen to host "on train" book discussions, and the libraries will organize a series of community events to highlight local rail and subway history. Events are expected to include STEM programming led by MBTA engineers and collaborators, a screening of the PBS documentary *The Race Underground*, an exhibit by the Cohasset Historical Society related to Henry Whitney (a principal figure in Most's history), and tours of the MBTA Control Operations Center. The three month initiative will culminate with a talk by the book's author, Doug Most, at Boston's South Station in the summer of 2017.

"All Aboard, Greenbush!" is a fantastic idea and a true innovation for engaging people on the go in Greater Boston. Local history is a great conversation starter, and sharing that history is an opportunity to bring people together and remind them how local libraries provide rewarding and enriching experiences," **said Mayor Robert Hedlund.**

"We're excited to partner with our neighboring libraries, the MBTA, and author Doug Most to bring a unique experience to Greenbush riders," **said Rob MacLean, Director of Library Services for Weymouth.** "Today's libraries are about helping to create communities and supporting a love of reading and books. With 'All Aboard, Greenbush!' we look forward to making both of those happen for these MBTA commuters."

"All Aboard, Greenbush!: One Train, One Book" is brought to you with federal funds provided by the Institute of Museum and Library Services and administered by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC).

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