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Potential breakthrough to the parking logjam at Orinda BART

By Nick Marnell



Commuters who carpool to the Orinda BART station using an app from Scoop Technologies will be guaranteed a parking space until 10 a.m. in permit parking areas at the station, BART board president Rebecca Saltzman announced at the Orinda City Council meeting Nov. 8.

Saltzman said that the district goal was to maximize the limited number of parking spaces at the Orinda station by increasing the number of BART riders using each parking space. "We're trying to get more than one person to show up in each car so that there will be more parking spaces available for those who need them," Saltzman told the council.

BART board president Rebecca Saltzman explains Scoop partnership to Orinda City Council. Photo Nick Marnell

To qualify for the guaranteed parking space in the permit lot, users first download the app from Scoop, a managed carpool program based in San Francisco. The night before the trip to BART, drivers schedule a trip to the Orinda station and the app will attempt to match the

driver with a rider nearby. "About 90 percent of people are getting matched," Saltzman said, based on data from five BART stations already enrolled in the program.

According to the Scoop website, most rides will cost a few dollars, and a ride home is guaranteed. If a rider is "Scooped" into the Orinda station, and for any reason, Scoop is unable to fulfill the ride back, Scoop will reimburse the cost of alternate transportation home up to a maximum of \$50 per month.

"This is also a great way to serve our parent community," said Vice Mayor Amy Worth, noting that parents who drop off kids at school in the morning would likely never get to the BART station by the typical 7:30 a.m. fill-up time and are even less likely to secure a coveted parking permit.

Those who could be negatively affected by the program are the BART parking permit holders, who pay \$105 monthly for the right to park in the Orinda station permit lot if they arrive by 10 a.m. By adding spaces for Scoop commuters, the district would be constricting the spaces available to permit holders, said Council Member Darlene Gee.

"So far, we've been able to avoid that," said Saltzman, explaining that data provided by Scoop has allowed the district to prudently manage parking space availability. After 10 a.m. any empty spot in the BART permit area becomes available to the general public for a fee on a first-come, first-served basis.

BART said it will make every effort to deliver the guaranteed parking spaces to Scoop users, but during certain events, like a San Francisco Giants afternoon baseball game, demand may be such that protecting parking spaces will be extremely difficult.

The BART-Scoop carpool program, a partnership with the nine-county Bay Area Metropolitan Transportation Commission, debuted in Orinda on Nov. 13.

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