

## New wheels are causing a stir

**BRETT BUNDALE**

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The streets of Montreal are patrolled by police on 10 horses, 42 motorcycles, 130 bicycles and 1,268 cars.

And, since the beginning of the month, the fleet has been bolstered by four T3 Motions, three-wheeled electric vehicles similar to a Segway Personal Transporter.

The motorized tricycle looks like a compact, upright scooter with a standing platform, and has been described as a rolling lollipop, a pogo stick with wheels and a high-tech witch's broom.

As fuel prices eat into the Montreal police's budget, what began as a move to be greener might actually help the force save money.

"The main reason we got these vehicles was to save the planet," Sgt. Ian Lafrenière said. "But they are also cheap to run."

T3s run on about 10 cents of electricity a day, produce no emissions and glide across the city at a maximum speed of 40 kilometres an hour for up to four hours before they need to be recharged. With one replacement battery, the T3s can last a patrol officer's entire shift.

T3s are made by a U.S. company, also called T3 Motion, and are being used by other police forces, including in Los Angeles and Washington. Each vehicle costs about \$15,000 and includes an extra battery and accessories such as snow tires.

"But we have a real winter here," Lafrenière said. "So once there's snow we'll use them indoors, like in shopping centres."

This summer, the vehicles have been spotted in downtown parks and streets, especially during festivals and events.

"They're very effective in a crowd," Lafrenière said. "People can see you easily."

Compared with foot patrol, the vehicle also helps police officers cover more ground and interact more closely with the community.

"In a car, you're in a bubble. From the T3, you can hear and see things and even smell things that normally you wouldn't," Lafrenière said.

Montreal police officers received a day of training on how to drive perched atop the T3 Motion's raised platform, about 50 centimetres from the ground.



CREDIT: PIERRE OBENDRAUF, THE GAZETTE

A police officer demonstrates his new ride on Ste. Catherine St. this month.

"It can turn on a dime, so you have to be careful to balance your weight when you turn. It's like skiing," Lafrenière said.

T3 Motion police vehicles are permitted on any road with a speed limit of 50 kilometres an hour.

In an emergency, they can go on sidewalks, as well. Segways, which are available for personal use, are prohibited from Montreal's streets and sidewalks, except for a few areas in the Old Port.

Watch of a [video](#) of the T3 Motions in action.

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