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## City police, paramedics to test 3-wheeler patrols

By **Jeremy Boren**

TRIBUNE-REVIEW

Saturday, June 28, 2008



Pittsburgh police and paramedics will test-drive electric three-wheelers during the Three Rivers Regatta July 3 and 4 to determine whether the city should buy some of the eco-friendly vehicles, police said.

The merits go beyond reducing the ever-rising price of gas consumption for the police bureau's roughly 270 vehicles, which travel about 250,000 miles a month.

"They let you cover a lot of area a lot faster than you could on foot," said Sgt. Gordon McDaniel, the police fleet supervisor.

McDaniel tested the vehicles Friday with Chief Nate Harper, city Finance Director Scott Kunka and others.

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Electric vehicle

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"You'll be able to have direct interaction with people, unlike being in a car," McDaniel said.

The black-and-white electric trikes, manufactured by California-based T3 Motion, offer a stable, nine-inch platform that allows officers to see over crowds to spot trouble, McDaniel said.

With a top speed of 20 to 25 mph, the vehicles remain charged for three to four hours, have a zero-degree turning radius and can blare police lights and sirens at the touch of a button. Each costs about 10 cents a day to operate, based on the cost of charging them from a 110-volt outlet, McDaniel said.

The 300-pound vehicle can carry and tow up to 450 pounds, which could allow paramedics to rig it with a gurney for taking a patient to an ambulance.

Police departments in Los Angeles, Salem, Mass., and Hollywood, Fla., have used the vehicles. If Harper decides to buy some, the officers who use them likely would work in pairs as do police officers on motorcycles.

"Chief Harper was saying they could be used in areas like Market Square, South Side Works, Station Square and the Waterworks Mall," McDaniel said. "I think the public is really going to like these things."

*Jeremy Boren can be reached at [jboren@tribweb.com](mailto:jboren@tribweb.com) or 412-765-2312.*

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