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### Miramar police trying out new set of wheels: a scooter

#### Electric scooter brings green efficiency, quiet authority to Miramar patrols

By Jennifer Gollan

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#### MIRAMAR

Police in this city have added an unlikely tool to their arsenal: a three-wheeled electric scooter that evokes R2-D2, the Star Wars droid.

The \$10,663 battery-powered chariot bears Miramar police decals, with flashing lights and sirens lending some heft and authority. Each weekday, an officer will use it to patrol the Town Center, monitoring the parking garage, new library and City Hall as a way to deter crime. But because it reaches only 25 mph, the scooter has yet to prove it's as agile as it is green.

"I doubt this thing will chase down escaping convicts," said Phil Rosenberg, the city's human resources director. "It doesn't substitute for the things a patrol car can do, but it provides a more direct link between citizens and law enforcement in garages and with outdoor gatherings."

Miramar began using its first and only scooter earlier this month. If it proves effective in thwarting crime, the city likely will buy additional ones to patrol Miramar Regional Park, in the western part of the city, and other areas.

"It looks really futuristic," said Elsi Rose, Miramar's development and capital management coordinator, who parks in the garage across from City Hall. "I felt reassured when I saw it. I like the idea that this has zero carbon emissions, too."

When he drove a patrol car, Officer Michael Underwood used to burn a tank of gas in one 11-hour shift. Now, he just recharges the batteries in his scooter.

"It's easier to get around," Underwood said. "Now I can sneak up on people, and because I'm elevated above the ground, it's easier to see."

He said some drivers used to park illegally in the fire lanes in front of City Hall, but now, when they see him on his scooter, they park elsewhere.

"I think we'll find it has utility in crowds," Rosenberg said, adding the city bought the scooter as a deterrent, not in response to a crime wave. "Police can move through on these instead of on foot."



The city's new library, transit hub and cultural center, opening over the next few months, are expected to draw scores of people to the center around City Hall at 2300 Civic Center Place.

More than 300 police agencies nationwide have the scooters, said Brian Buccella, vice president of sales and marketing at T3 Motion Inc., based in Costa Mesa, Calif. In South Florida, at least eight law enforcement agencies use them, including the Broward Sheriff's Office and Hollywood police.

"When they see me riding around, most of the city workers say they want it for their work," Underwood said. "A lot of people think it's cool."

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