Fully electric urban car can make itself smaller

We recently saw the Lit C-1 provide a glimpse into the future of transport design, and now researchers at MIT's Changing Places Group and Denokinn have begun testing the Hiriko Fold, a fully electric vehicle which is able to collapse into a more compact shape when parking.

We first heard about the project while it was still in the concept development phase, but the team have since created a working model of the Fold, which is being test driven around the streets of Vitoria-Gasteiz, in the Basque region of Spain. The idea was to build a vehicle designed with both urban and environmental concerns in mind, and thus is completely powered by electricity, able to provide 120 kilometers of driving on a full charge. Although the car is only 2.5 meters long when unfolded, the front chassis is capable of being tilted upwards, allowing three of the cars to fit into a standard parking space. The two-seater vehicle has one large door at the front to save yet more space. Each wheel can be controlled independently of the others, allowing for sharper turning and easier parallel parking into tight spaces. The following video gives a demonstration of the Hiriko Fold in action:

The car is due to be on the European market by 2013 at a cost of EUR 12,500 for private ownership, although there may also be plans to introduce it as a public rental scheme similar to existing shared bicycle networks, both in Spain and elsewhere.

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