GM Phone App May Replace Car Navigation System

The Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) — General Motors soon will sell a $50 smartphone application that could replace your dashboard navigation system.

The company said Wednesday that the app, called GoGo Link, will project smartphone navigation systems onto a dashboard touch screen. Drivers can control the system with the touch screen and listen to voice directions through the car's speaker system. The screen also will show maps.

The app works with iPhone or Android systems. It will be available later this year on Chevrolet's 2013 subcompacts, the Spark and Sonic.

Smartphones have had global positioning systems and navigation apps that give turn-by-turn voice directions for at least two years, but they were tough to use in a car because the maps are small and it's sometimes hard to hear the voice directions. The app, made by EnGIS Technologies Inc. of South Korea, has a lot of the features of in-dash car systems that cost more than $1,000.

There is a bit of a catch. To get the app to work, cars have to have Chevrolet's MyLink touch screen system, which is coming out in new models. GM would not say how much MyLink would cost. It comes standard on some more costly models but is an option on lower-level models.

GM decided to sell the app after doing research on potential Spark and Sonic buyers, said Sara LeBlanc, GM's global infotainment manager. Ninety percent of Spark and Sonic buyers own smartphones. They told GM that they wanted to use navigation systems from their phones because they don't have the money to pay for a car system.

She wouldn't say directly if the app will be available in more GM vehicles, saying that customers will make the decision.

"This is new territory for us here at Chevy," she said. "Navigation is going to continue to evolve."

GM plans to show off GoGo Link at the New York International Auto Show starting next week.

The Sonic already is on sale, with the 2013 model coming this summer. The Spark, Chevrolet's smallest car, goes on sale in the summer as well.

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