

Good morning, my name is Ken Smithson. I am the General Manager of Midland-Odessa Urban Transit District; otherwise doing business as *EZ RIDER*.

I am representing the Permian Basin Regional Planning Commission in West Texas; a 16-county region with the second largest land area in the state – some 24,000 square miles.

EZ RIDER is the urban provider in the cities of Midland and Odessa. West Texas Opportunities is the rural provider in 17 counties in that area; and their Transportation Director is here with me today. We have two 5311 subcontractors in our region. Midessa Transportation, one of the local taxi services, is the current Medicaid provider; and two of their representatives are here as well.

EZ RIDER just completed its second year of service, after an absence of public transit in Midland-Odessa for several decades. We're the "new kid on the block," but have become very well respected in that short length of time by our transportation partners and local & state officials. Thus, *EZ RIDER* was unanimously selected as the Lead Agency.

We all view this as an exciting opportunity – at the very least to get everyone to the same table, perhaps for the first time in our area. In addition to the providers I mentioned earlier, our PTC, the MPO and the Planning Commission have attended all of our meetings. The Workforce Development Board, the Workforce Network in both cities, Rehabilitative Services, MHMR, Area Agency on Aging, DHS, Veteran's Administration, and other human service agencies have also been at our meetings.

As we talked, we found that we are already coordinating to a large degree out of necessity and on behalf of our clients. This coordination has occurred, not just between providers, and providers and other agencies, but even between regions, such as Concho Valley to the east and South Plains to the north. We didn't need to be told to coordinate; we were already doing it. Thus, in this process, we'd like to codify what we're already doing, while looking for other ways to improve our services and optimize the resources that are available.

EZ RIDER is about to secure Federal planning funds from the MPO, and we intend to hire a Professional Planner to spearhead this effort in our region. Regional Service Planning will be this person's job. Our budget is \$58,000, and we don't anticipate needing any assistance from the State at this time.