

Regional Service Plan For Coordinated Transportation In the Permian Basin (Region 9)

Andrews, Borden, Crane, Dawson, Ector, Gaines, Glasscock, Howard, Loving, Martin, Midland, Pecos, Reeves, Terrell, Upton, Ward, Winkler

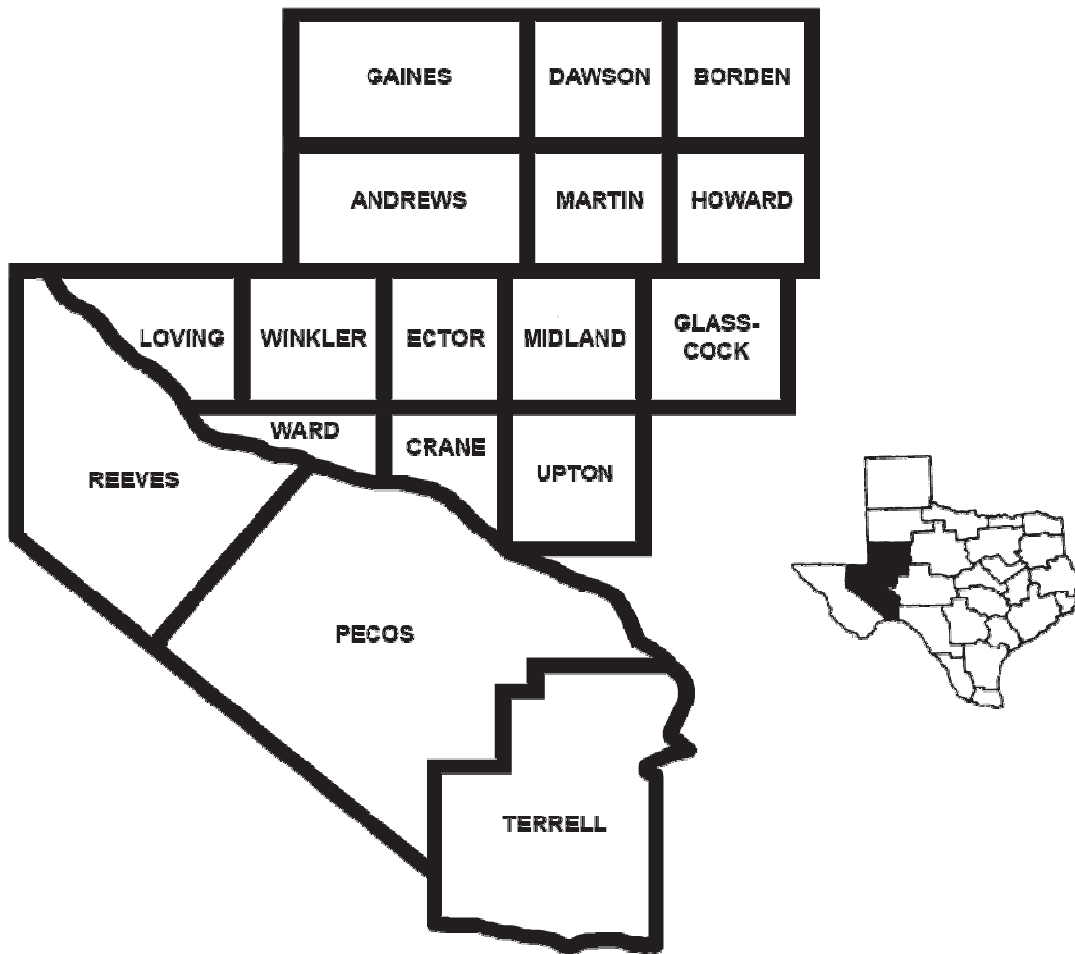


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I. Acknowledgements

We certainly thank all the stakeholders who have participated in this ongoing planning process by regularly attending meetings, actively contributing to the discussions and freely sharing information for inclusion in this document.

However, we wish to make particular mention of the following agencies and individuals, who have provided planning funds and technical assistance to Midland-Odessa Urban Transit District throughout this process:

Midland-Odessa Transportation Organization – Policy Board

Mike Bradford, Midland County Commissioner (Chairman)
James B. Goates, DDS, Odessa City Councilman (Vice-Chairman)
Berry D. Simpson, Midland City Councilman
Freddie Gardner, Ector County Commissioner
Lauren D. Garduño, P.E., TxDOT District Engineer

Brian Roe, Executive Director

Texas Department of Transportation – Odessa District Office

Gary J. Law, P.E., Director of Transportation, Planning & Design
Alfredo Gonzales, Public Transportation Coordinator

In addition, we would like to offer a special thanks to Kenneth Smithson for his dedication to organize and lead the Regional Service Planning committee from June 2005 to September 2006, and his significant contribution to the writing of this document.

II. Executive Summary

The purpose of this document is to furnish decisive information regarding the Permian Basin Region's endeavor to coordinate the delivery of public transportation services, so as to optimize the efficiency and effectiveness of the services being provided.

House Bill 3588, Chapter 461, Section 13.01, mandates statewide coordination of public transportation. Outlined in the bill are specific goals and guidance administered by the Texas Transportation Commission through the Texas Department of Transportation, and ultimately resting with regional planning efforts involving local public transportation providers and other planning partners. Driving factors behind the bill are the need to identify possible inefficiencies in the delivery of public transportation, or the lack of needed transportation services.

Out of necessity, public transportation service providers and health & human service agencies in the Permian Basin have historically worked closely with each other to ultimately benefit the end users of such services. Thus, this document serves to codify the existing practices that demonstrate the outstanding communication, collaboration and coordination that is already evident in this region.

Simultaneously, this document shall serve to identify any overlaps and gaps in transportation service; along with potential strategies to address the outstanding needs in the Permian Basin. This document is more than a proposal. It is a roadmap to ensure that the region's public transportation needs are being met.

The focal point of the coordination plan is to identify unmet transportation needs. Following is a summary of such needs:

- Aging 5310/5311 vehicles
- Need for elimination of waste in the provision of public transportation services
- Need for inter-city services, inter-modal and multi-modal facilities
- Need to generate efficiencies that will permit increased levels of service
- Need to ensure maximum coverage of the service area
- Need for accessible taxi's
- Need for a travel training information system
- Need for incremental continuous improvement
- Draw other participants
- Increase Marketing
- Joint procurements for planning/capital outlays and sharing of resources
- Maintenance agreements

EZ RIDER and MPO funds were utilized for the planning process of the Regional

Service Plan (RSP). It is the intent of the stakeholders to pursue funding for projects outlined in the RSP, as well as to continue to examine, evaluate, and implement updates and revisions as appropriate to all items identified in this report. Additionally, the regional group will be pursuing other Federal funds (i.e., JARC, New Freedom) for proposed projects as appropriate.

III. Background

A. Regional Description

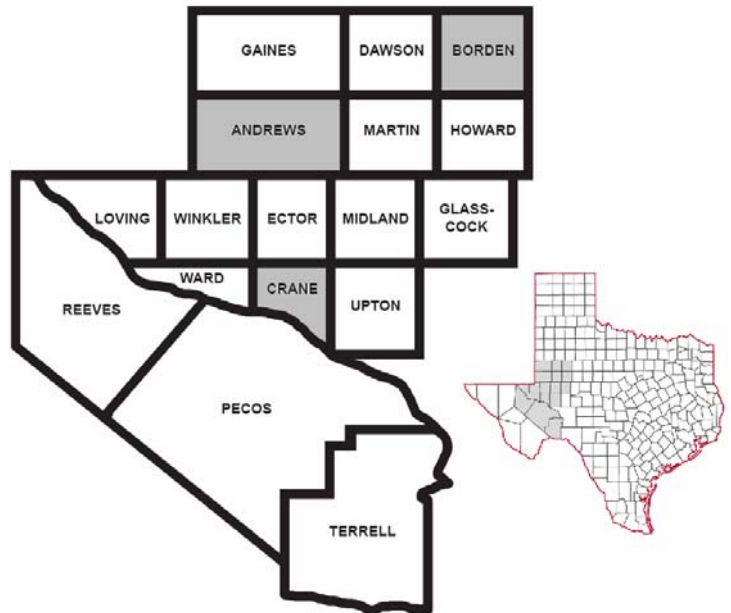
Located in West Texas, the Permian Basin is predominately a rural area with a land mass of 23,459 square miles and an average population density of some 16.1 persons per square mile. Within the region are the City of Midland and the City of Odessa, one Census Designated Place (West Odessa), and several smaller rural communities.

i. Geography and Demographics

Andrews County. Covering more than 1,500 square miles (M²), with a U.S. Census 2004 estimated population of 12,840. Andrews County experienced a moderate 1.3% decrease in overall population from 2000 to 2004. In previous years, Andrews relied heavily on oil production. Now, the county has diversified into waste disposal and has plans for complex disposal systems. More than 2,100 inhabitants are over 60 years of age and 2,154 residents are non-institutionalized persons with disabilities. The area is served by West Texas Opportunities, Inc. – Permian Basin Rural Transit District (TRAX), as well as the Andrews Senior Citizens Center.

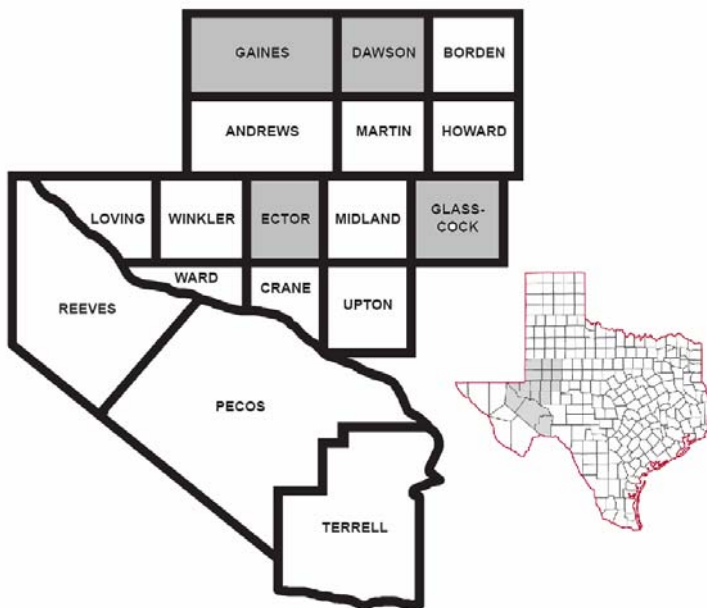
Borden County. Predominantly an oil producing area, there are 683 people living in Borden County by 2004 estimates, with 81 categorized as disabled. The populace has diminished 6.3%, while the aged segment has grown to 23.2%. The area comprises 899 M² and is served by TRAX.

Crane County. Currently 3,849 people reside in this county of 786 M². Once a huge oil producer with over a billion and a half barrels of oil to its legacy, Crane now champions small industry and tourism. As with most Permian Basin counties, the 3.7% decline is mostly attributed to the migration of younger society to urban areas. Its senior population has risen slightly to 15.2% and it has approximately 800 persons with disabilities. The area is served by TRAX and the Crane County Senior Citizens Center.



Dawson County. Primarily an agricultural area comprised of 902 M², Dawson County is home to 14,383 residents, a decline of 4% since Census 2000. More than 17% are over the age of 60 and 2,718 have been classified as persons with disabilities. The area's providers are TRAX and the Dawson County Senior Citizens Center.

Ector County. At 901 M², Ector County is home to the City of Odessa and more than 124,000 residents. With a strong farming and petrochemical economy, Ector County's demographics increased in all areas from 2000 to 2004, with 14.5% of the population over 60 years old and more than 20,000 persons with disabilities. Odessa itself has experienced a slight growth in population at 1.8% since Census 2000. Fixed-route and ADA complementary paratransit service within the urbanized area of Odessa is provided by Midland-Odessa Urban Transit District (dba *EZ RIDER*). The Medical Transportation Program is contracted to West Texas Opportunities, Inc., with Midessa Transportation LLC (a private for-hire taxi service) and *EZ RIDER* serving as subcontractors in the urbanized area. The rural segments of the county are served by TRAX and the Ector County Senior Center.

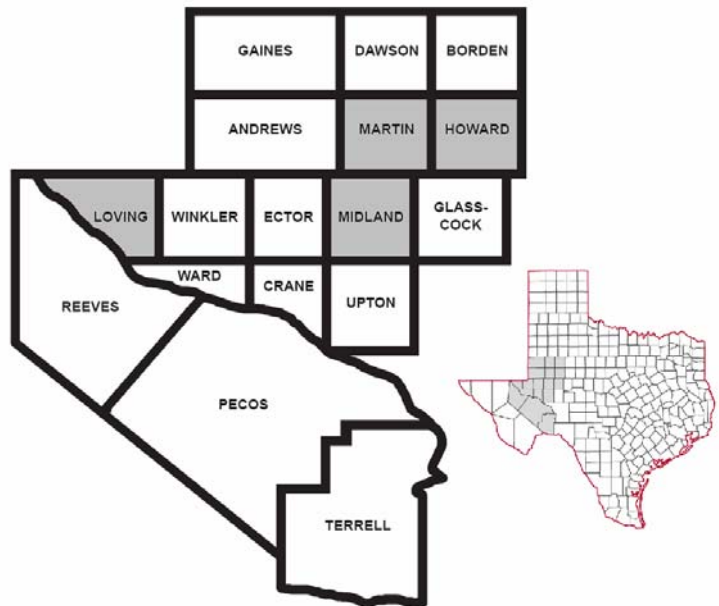


Gaines County. Aspiring growth at 0.7%, Gaines County's 1,502 M² is home to a fairly recent Mennonite settlement maintaining its own school system and church in adherence to their agrarian traditions. More than 2,200 residents are considered disabled and 13.9% are 60 years old and older. A former leading oil producer, Gaines County's current economy is centered on agriculture. The area's providers are TRAX, Seagraves Senior Citizens Center, and Seminole Senior Citizens Center.

Glasscock County. Home to 1,406 residents, Glasscock County is 901 M² and has an economy that depends chiefly on ranching. Experiencing a 5.1% population decrease since 2000, the 60 years and older segment make up 13.3% of the populace; while 199 people are considered disabled. The area is served by TRAX.

Howard County. Principally an oil producing and farming region, the county is over 900 M². The City of Big Spring is home to 25,233 of the county's 32,879 residents. The Big Spring Veterans Medical Facility attracts veterans from several regions; transportation is provided by the Disabled American Veterans organization through volunteerism. With a 2.2% decline in the population, 6,164 are persons with disabilities and 18.6% of the county is aged 60 or older. The area's providers are TRAX and the Spring City Senior Center.

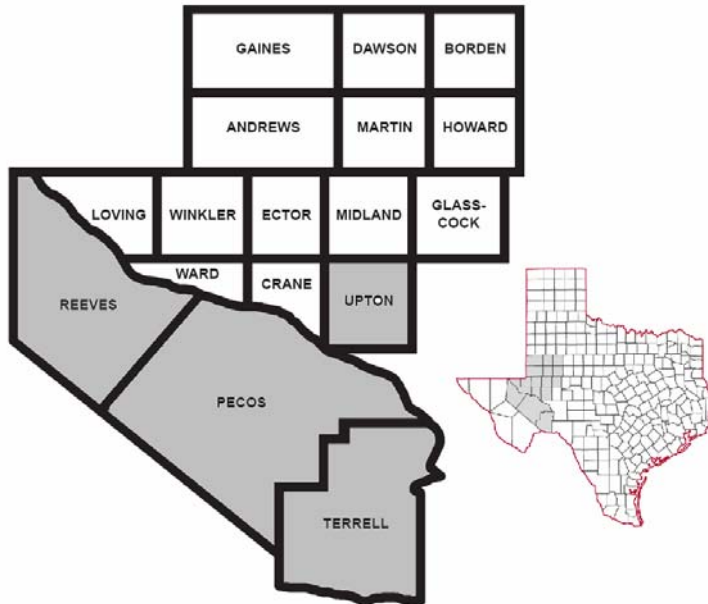
Loving County. The U.S. Census declared this the least populated county in the United States with 52 people, according to the 2004 estimate. Of this number, 22 are considered disabled and 22.4% are over the age of 60. Isolated and undeveloped, Loving County enjoys the highest per capita income of any county in the United States. The area is served by TRAX.



Martin County. With an economy based mostly on agriculture, Martin County has experienced many successes in oil production over its 915 M². Inhabited by 4,448 people of which 610 are disabled and 17.5% over the age of 60, Martin County exhibited a 6.3% decrease in population from 2000 to 2004, especially younger segments. The area is served by TRAX and the Martin County Senior Citizens Center.

Midland County. Located within the 900 M² county is a significant portion of the City of Midland, the region's most populated urban area with over 97,000 residents. By U.S. Census 2004 estimates the county in its entirety is home to 120,344 people. Persons with disabilities account for 17,459 people and 14.7% of the overall populace are aged 60 and older. With a strong economy in agriculture, oil and petrochemical technology, as well as being the administrative center of the Permian Basin, the population has grown 3.7% - faster than any other county in the region. Fixed-route and ADA complementary paratransit service are provided in the urbanized area by *EZ RIDER*. West Texas Opportunities, Inc. administers the Medical Transportation Program; subcontracting to Midessa Transportation and *EZ RIDER* in the urban area. Public transportation in the rural portions of the county is provided by TRAX.

Pecos County. By far the largest county in the region in land area with over 4,764 M², Pecos County has experienced a 5.1% reduction in populace to 15,949. With 3,749 disabled persons and a growing 14.7% older population, Pecos boasts a strong history of oil production. The area is served by TRAX and the Pecos County Community Action Agency.



Reeves County. The second largest county in the Permian Basin, Reeves County is 2,636 M² with a population of 11,842; a decrease of 9.9% since U.S. Census 2004 estimates. Typical of most counties in the region, Reeves' senior population is rising—currently at 16.9% by Census 2004 estimates. Persons with disabilities account for 2,280 of the population. The economy is based on petrochemicals, agriculture and tourism. The area is served by TRAX and the Pecos Senior Citizens Center.

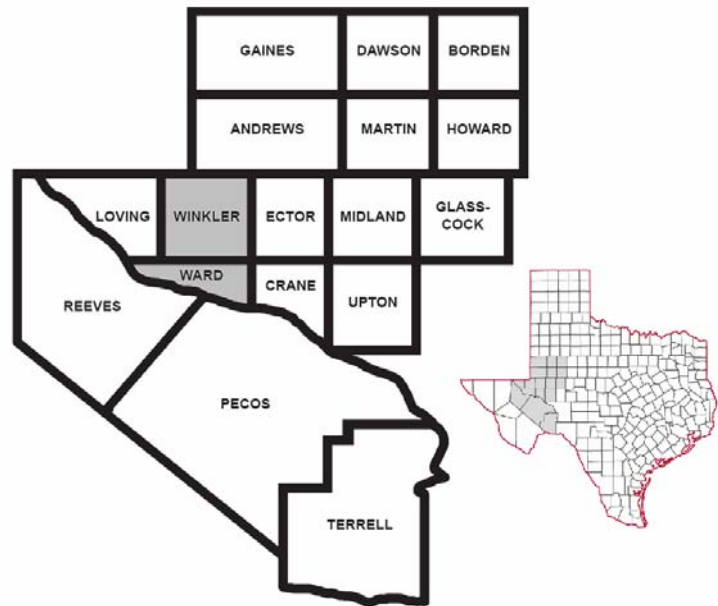
Terrell County. Terrell County experienced the second largest drop in citizenry to 957 people, down 11.5% from the previous census. Additionally, the

county has the highest senior population per capita at 24.6% and overall, 280 are considered disabled. Migration of the younger segments have accounted for the significant change. Due to the rough terrain in its 2,358 M², livestock is the primary source of economic activity. The area is served by TRAX and Terrell County Transportation.

Upton County. Covering 1,242 M², Upton County has an agricultural and livestock oriented economy. The population of 3,147 people has a high percentage of older individuals at 19.6% and 777 disabled persons. The area is served by TRAX, McCamey Senior Services, Inc., and Rankin Senior Services, Inc.

Ward County. Comprised of 835 M², Ward County is home to 10,358 citizens; a drop of 5.1% since Census 2000. The population segment growth is focused at citizens over 60 years old at 18.7%. Estimates show that 2,042 of the aggregate population are disabled. Ward's economy is hydrocarbon and agricultural based. The area is served by TRAX, Ward County Senior Citizens Center and Grandfalls Senior Citizens Center.

Winkler County. A 6.4% decrease in Winkler County's citizenry brings 2004 estimates to 6,714 people. The aging population has increased to 18.4% and 1,384 have been classified as disabled. The economy of this 841 M² area is primarily agriculture. The area is served by TRAX and the Andrews Senior Citizens Center.



Summary

Fourteen (14) of the 17 counties in the Permian Basin Region have experienced a **decrease** in population. Also, when the Census 2000 figures and 2004 estimates are analyzed, a distinct upward trend in the aging segment of the population emerges; facilitated by a migration of the younger populace to urban areas. (See Tables 1 and 2)

Two public transportation providers, several senior centers and a few social service agencies account for the delivery of public transit and Medicaid transportation infrastructure for an area over 23,000 square miles.

Extremely low population densities and vast distances leave the general public, including aged citizens and persons with disabilities, to rely heavily on public transit functions for basic essentials such as shopping and healthcare.

Table 1 – Shift in Population

County	Population 2000	Population 2004 Estimated	% Change 2000 - 2004	Actual Change	Over 65	Over 60	ADA	Zero Auto Avail	% Zero Auto Avail	County Seat	Transportation Provider	Land Area M ²
Andrews	13,004	12,840	-1.3%	-164	12.5%	16.5%	2154	312	6.8	Andrews	West Texas Opportunities	1501
Borden	729	683	-6.3%	-46	16.3%	23.2%	81	4	1.4	Gail	West Texas Opportunities	899
Crane	3,996	3,849	-3.7%	-147	10.9%	15.2%	813	83	6.1	Crane	West Texas Opportunities	786
Dawson	14,985	14,383	-4.0%	-602	14.0%	17.7%	2718	375	7.9	Lamesa	West Texas Opportunities	902
Ector	121,123	124,488	1.8%	3,365	10.9%	14.5%	20604	3267	7.5	Odessa	West Texas Opportunities	901
Gaines	14,467	14,563	0.7%	96	10.3%	13.9%	2264	208	4.4	Seminole	West Texas Opportunities	1502
Glasscock	1,406	1,334	-5.1%	-72	9.0%	13.3%	199	13	2.7	Garden City	West Texas Opportunities	901
Howard	33,627	32,879	-2.2%	-748	14.6%	18.6%	6164	1065	9.4	Big Spring	West Texas Opportunities	903
Loving	67	52	-22.4%	-15	16.4%	22.4%	22	0	0.0	Mentone	West Texas Opportunities	673
Martin	4,746	4,448	-6.3%	-298	13.3%	17.5%	610	124	7.6	Stanton	West Texas Opportunities	915
Midland	116,009	120,344	3.7%	4,335	11.6%	15.1%	17459	2578	6.0	Midland	West Texas Opportunities	900
Pecos	16,809	15,949	-5.1%	-860	10.8%	14.7%	3749	341	6.6	Fort Stockton	West Texas Opportunities	4764
Reeves	13,137	11,842	-9.9%	-1,295	12.6%	16.9%	2380	398	9.7	Pecos	West Texas Opportunities	2636
Terrell	1,081	957	-11.5%	-124	17.6%	24.6%	280	56	12.6	Sanderson	West Texas Opportunities	2358
Upton	3,404	3,147	-7.5%	-257	14.2%	19.6%	777	81	6.4	Rankin	West Texas Opportunities	1242
Ward	10,909	10,358	-5.1%	-551	14.3%	18.7%	2042	321	8.1	Monahans	West Texas Opportunities	835
Winkler	7,173	6,714	-6.4%	-459	14.3%	18.4%	1384	152	5.9	Kermit	West Texas Opportunities	841

Urban Areas											
City	Population 2000	Population 2004 Estimated	% Change 2000 - 2004	Actual Change	Over 65	Over 60	ADA	Zero Auto Avail	% Zero Auto Avail	N/A	Transportation Provider
Midland	94,996	97,604	2.7%	2,608	11,698	14,989	14,066	2,337	6.8%		MOUTD
Odessa	90,943	93,761	3.1%	2,818	10,691	14,001	14,812	2,701	8.0%		MOUTD
West Odessa	17,799	18,616	4.6%	817	1,374	1,990	3,497	267	4.6%		West Texas Opportunities

Source: Texas State Data Center and Office of the State Demographer, Texas Population Estimates Program (online), <http://txsdc.utsa.edu/tpopp/txpopest.php>, San Antonio, TX: Texas

Table 2 – County Demographics

County	Income	%Poverty	<5	5 to 9	10 to 14	15 to 19	20 to 24	25 to 34	35 to 44	45 to 54	55 to 59	60 to 64	65 to 74	75 to 84	85+	Median
Andrews	\$37,017	16.4%	957	1,026	1,256	1,262	658	1,475	2,079	1,566	590	514	937	542	142	34.1
Borden	\$36,458	14.0%	27	43	63	67	28	70	130	86	46	50	78	32	9	40.9
Crane	\$36,820	13.4%	307	345	367	393	170	461	612	539	196	170	229	157	50	34.2
Dawson	\$32,745	19.7%	945	1,000	1,123	1,159	942	2,185	2,421	1,885	632	555	1,097	754	287	35.6
Ector	\$36,369	18.7%	9,666	10,169	10,370	10,819	8,485	15,487	18,362	15,064	5,056	4,407	7,742	4,227	1,269	32.0
Gaines	\$34,046	21.7%	1,208	1,305	1,593	1,454	885	1,695	2,175	1,565	572	525	877	445	168	29.7
Glasscock	\$43,000	14.7%	112	131	131	146	51	161	239	176	73	60	84	29	13	33.5
Howard	\$37,262	18.6%	1,998	2,231	2,412	2,452	2,072	4,905	5,496	4,289	1,515	1,359	2,652	1,672	574	36.4
Loving	\$53,750	0.0%	2	2	6	3	1	2	16	15	5	4	9	2	0	45.8
Martin	\$35,965	18.7%	409	435	477	402	206	598	654	522	213	198	344	197	91	32.5
Midland	\$47,269	12.9%	8,732	9,594	10,354	9,970	6,622	14,036	18,944	15,431	4,759	4,101	7,585	4,420	1,461	34.1
Pecos	\$31,122	20.4%	1,106	1,245	1,327	1,735	1,549	2,192	2,387	2,021	770	656	1,066	576	179	31.2
Reeves	\$24,856	28.9%	919	1,041	1,133	1,287	1,031	1,568	1,738	1,556	646	562	952	539	165	32.1
Terrell	\$28,906	25.2%	60	73	96	76	36	94	159	158	63	76	114	57	19	42.0
Upton	\$37,083	19.9%	188	256	329	346	148	309	537	455	171	183	272	149	61	38.1
Ward	\$36,014	17.9%	716	827	976	1,158	508	1,124	1,615	1,418	527	482	894	498	166	36.0
Winkler	\$34,021	18.7%	501	571	624	660	408	803	1,072	883	332	291	549	367	112	35.2

Source: Texas State Data Center and Office of the State Demographer, Texas Population Estimates Program (online), <http://txsdc.utsa.edu/tpopp/txpopest.php>, San Antonio, TX: Texas

ii. Transportation Planning Partners

AGENCY	CONTACT INFORMATION	SPONSORING ORGANIZATION	STATE
Midland-Odessa Transportation Organization	Brian Roe, Executive Director Abel Gamez, Planner P.O. Box 60916 Midland, TX 78711 432-617-0129	Midland County City of Midland Ector County City of Odessa	Texas Department of Transportation
Texas Department of Transportation Odessa District	Alfredo Gonzales, Public Transportation Coordinator 3901 East Highway 80 Odessa, TX 79761 432-332-0501	Texas Department of Transportation	Texas Department of Transportation
Midland-Odessa Urban Transit District	Edward Esparza, General Manager 8007 E. Highway 80 Odessa, TX 79765	City of Midland City of Odessa	Texas Department of Transportation
West Texas Opportunities, Inc.	Janet Everheart, Exec. Director Richard B. Jones, Trans. Director P.O. Box 1308 Lamesa, TX 79331 806-872-8354	West Texas Opportunities, Inc	Texas Department of Transportation
Permian Basin Workforce Development Board	Willie Taylor, Executive Director Gail Dickenson, Deputy Director P.O. Box 61947 Midland, Texas 79711 432.563.5239	N/A	Texas Workforce Commission Texas Department of Transportation
Workforce Network of Midland / Odessa	Lupe Villanueva, BSU Rep. 3510 N. A, Building A Midland, TX 79705 432-685-8305 Pat Hanson, Director 2626 JBS Parkway, Bldg. D Odessa, TX 79761 432-367-3332	Permian Basin Regional Planning Commission Contractor for the Permian Basin Workforce Development Board	Texas Workforce Commission
Area Agency on Aging of the Permian Basin	Sue Fielder, Director P O Box 60660 Midland, TX 78711 432-563-1061	Permian Basin Regional Planning Commission	Texas Health and Human Services Commission, Dept of Aging and Disability Services
Department of Assistive and Rehabilitation Services; Division for Rehabilitative Services	Rick Moss, Area Manager 2780 North Grandview Odessa, TX 79762 432-367-3883	Texas Health and Human Services Commission, Department of Assistive and Rehabilitation Services	Texas Health and Human Services Commission, Department of Assistive and Rehabilitation Services
Casa de Amigos of Midland, TX, Inc.	Lael Cordes-Pitts, Exec. Director 1101 E Garden Lane Midland, TX 79701 432-682-9701	Casa de Amigos of Midland, TX, Inc.	N/A
Midessa Transportation	Bharat Mody, Manager 13710 W. Highway 80 E. Odessa, TX 79765 432-685-7070	Privately funded (for profit)	N/A
Permian Basin Community Centers for MHMR	Karl DeMorrow, Program Mgr. 1403 E. Front Midland, TX 79701 432-570-3411		
Ector County Senior Services	Joyce Thompson, Director 1225 N. Adams Odessa, TX 79761 432-337-5281	Ector County	Texas Department of Transportation

Community & Senior Services of Midland	Saul Herrera, RSVP Director 3301 Sinclair Ave. Midland, TX 79707 432-689-6693	City of Midland	N/A
Parks Methodist Retirement Village	Larry Beltran, Administrator 111 Parks Village Dr. Odessa, TX 79765 432-563-5707	N/A	N/A
West Texas VA Healthcare System	Sheldon Schellings Dept. of Veterans Affairs 432.264.4850 Big Spring, TX 79720-5500	Veterans Administration	Veterans Administration
Midland Community Healthcare Services	Dr. Michael Austin 2501 W. Illinois, Suite A Midland TX 79701 432.570.0238	The Texas Association of Community Health Centers (TACHC)	The Texas Association of Community Health Centers (TACHC)
All Aboard America!	Bert Beall, General Manager 10615 W. County Rd. 127 Midland, TX 79765 432-561-8520	N/A	N/A
Midland County Sheriff's Office Crisis Intervention Unit	Sue Slaton, Coordinator 400 S. Main Midland, TX 79701 432-688-4635	Midland County	N/A

iii. Current Transportation Services/Providers

Midland-Odessa Urban Transit District (dba *EZ RIDER*) – Urban transportation is the primary responsibility of *EZ RIDER*, an ADA equipped fixed-route bus service. Operating 19 “cutaway” and four industrial grade buses, *EZ RIDER* provides service in the cities of Midland and Odessa. *EZ RIDER* moves approximately 1,300 clients daily along 12 routes daily in a proficient, safe and responsible manner. In addition, *EZ RIDER* operates ADA complementary paratransit service in both communities. Predominately serving low income individuals, the focus of the system is to attract riders of all economic backgrounds. Appealing to those concerned about the environment, escalating cost of fuel and ease of use, *EZ RIDER* is bridging the traditional concepts about urban public transit in West Texas and promoting its use as a primary means of travel through public awareness and community outreach programs. Clients of *EZ RIDER* are difficult to categorize and fall into a complex matrix of working adults, senior citizens, persons with disabilities, low-income individuals, youths, college students, and to a lesser degree, commuter and recreational riders. High demand is placed on the system by clients seeking transportation to the region’s various medical facilities.

West Texas Opportunities, Inc. – The purpose of West Texas Opportunities Permian Basin Rural Transit District (TRAX) program is to provide professional, cost effective, coordinated passenger transportation services to the general public in the seventeen counties of the Permian Basin. Although rural clients constitute the majority of TRAX ridership, TRAX also serves West Odessa CDP – an unincorporated quasi-urban area adjacent to Odessa in Ector County – in a

demand responsive capacity. The majority of clients served are economically disadvantaged to include young single mothers, veterans, non-institutionalized disabled and non-English speaking Hispanic citizens living in rural areas. Senior citizens who are normally unable to commute the long distances for shopping and health care purposes constitute a significant portion of TRAX riders. Like *EZ RIDER*, ridership profiles are complex and dynamic.

Midessa Transportation LLC – Midessa is a privately owned taxi company operating in Midland, Odessa, Midland International Airport and locations in between. A large portion of Midessa’s fleet of vehicles is equipped for persons with disabilities and provides demand/response Medicaid oriented services under subcontract from West Texas Opportunities, Inc. Midessa operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week year long. Their fleet of 38 vehicles is dedicated primarily to commercial purposes.

Area Agency on Aging of the Permian Basin – Provides transportation for senior citizens through its various centers for the Elderly Nutrition Program, authorized under Title III, Grants for State and Community Programs on Aging; Title VI, Grants for Native Americans, under the Older Americans Act of 1965; Title XX, the Social Security Act (Congregate Meals). Transportation is provided for shopping, healthcare, recreation, and so forth.

B. History of Regional Coordination of Public Transportation

i. Past/Continuing Planning Activities

Introduction of Urban Service – Prior to October 2003, there had been no public transportation provider in the urbanized area of Midland-Odessa for decades. A short-lived attempt at public transportation in Midland was terminated in the mid 1980’s, and Odessa had not had transit service since the 1960’s. West Texas Opportunities, Inc., whose primary mission in the realm of public transportation was to serve those in the rural areas, provided transit services only for individuals traveling to and from the two cities. However, it did not operate comprehensive transportation services for persons traveling within the city limits. Thus, for the longest time, residents of Midland and Odessa were dependent on personal or borrowed automobiles, social service agencies, car pooling, taxis, bicycling or walking for their transportation needs.

However, with the introduction of *EZ RIDER* in October 2003, and the rapid integration of urban transit into the region’s transportation matrix – including the outstanding collaboration between *EZ RIDER* and the existing providers and purchasers of transportation – a huge unmet need in the Permian Basin was filled. The TxDOT Odessa District office was very instrumental in the conceptual planning and development of the urban transit system, which culminated in the successful resolution of a tremendous transportation gap.

Collaboration with Workforce Network – West Texas Opportunities, Inc., although headquartered in Lamesa, Texas, has for many years maintained a regional office at the Workforce Network in Midland. This, too, reveals the

natural partnership between public transportation services and work-related activities that has existed in the Permian Basin for some time.

ii. **Past/Current Implemented Projects/Services**

Participation of Planning Group – The working group, in itself, is an example of the outstanding coordination, collaboration and communication that has long existed in the region. Major planning partners and other key stakeholders have willingly come to the table to discuss the region’s transportation needs, with a view to improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the services that are already being provided. Their attendance, participation and solid contributions have not only given the project impetus, but have increased the stature of the project in the community and on the State level.

Representation of Planning Group – The team that was assembled for regional service planning is very representative of transit service delivery and the various transportation needs of end users. The planning process has included individuals and agencies that provide services for seniors, persons with disabilities, low-income individuals, as well as those with medical and work-related needs. The process has also brought together the area transportation providers, who are interested in working closely with each other, and with the various health and human service agencies. As time goes on, more and more local agencies are seeing the value of joining the discussions and contributing to the plan.

Leadership of Planning Group – The working group has particularly expressed appreciation for the leadership of *EZ RIDER* on this service plan. Although barely two years old when the project got under way in the late summer of 2005, *EZ RIDER* had quickly gained the respect of officials, business leaders, service providers and the general public in both cities, due to the excellent service that *EZ RIDER* provided, as well as its ability to develop relationships and build coalitions in the two communities. *EZ RIDER* took the initiative to assemble the planning group, and was subsequently named the lead agency by the group.

Fueling Agreement – *EZ RIDER* and West Texas Opportunities, Inc. entered into an agreement to allow rural buses to fuel at the urban transit facility. *EZ RIDER* had purposely built its fleet to use ultra-low sulfur diesel (ULSD), and had installed an aboveground fuel tank at its administration/maintenance facility in 2003. *EZ RIDER* was the first agency in the entire Permian Basin to use ULSD; at least three years in advance of the State mandate. When West Texas Opportunities needed to purchase new buses for fleet replacement, the TxDOT Odessa District office encouraged it to purchase diesel engine buses and facilitated a discussion that led to the fueling agreement with *EZ RIDER*. Now, when rural buses make trips into the urban area, they can stop for fuel at the *EZ RIDER* facility before leaving town again.

Consistent Fare Structure – To provide more consistency among transportation providers, and to facilitate the potential transferring of passengers from one provider to another, West Texas Opportunities changed its fare structure to more

closely match the one instituted by *EZ RIDER* in the urbanized area (\$1.00 base fare).

Consistent Fare Policy – To provide more consistency among transportation providers and health and human service agencies in the region, *EZ RIDER* lowered the age for persons to qualify for reduced senior citizen fares on urban transit buses from 65 to 60 years of age.

Route Service to HHS Agencies – When planning and implementing the fixed-route component of its system, *EZ RIDER* ensured that regular bus service was provided to the health and human service agencies. This included agencies such as Workforce Network, Texas Dept. of Health & Human Services, Texas Dept. of Assistive Rehabilitation Services, Social Security Administration, as well as a variety of community, senior and medical facilities, and employment centers.

Purchase of Fare Media – *EZ RIDER* quickly developed arrangements with the various health and human service agencies in the two cities, whereby they could purchase bus passes and trip tickets in bulk for distribution to their clients. In some cases (i.e., Workforce Network), rather than continuing the practice of giving cash to clients, bus passes began to be issued so that individuals could use public transportation to go to jobs, or to look for jobs. These bus passes could be used by the recipient for unlimited trips for other trip purposes as well.

Client Orientation – With the introduction of *EZ RIDER* in the urban area, many agencies embarked on a campaign to orient their clients to public transportation. This served to increase the mobility and independence of these individuals. In some cases (i.e., Casa de Amigos and Permian Basin Community Centers for MHMR), agencies found that they did NOT have to purchase new vehicles to transport their clients, or could rely less on their aging fleet, because public transportation was now available.

Publicity – The regional planning process in the Permian Basin has received generous coverage by the local media. All three television stations, the two major newspapers, and at least two radio stations have increased local awareness of the project.

Section 5310 Coordination – West Texas Opportunities, Inc. is the grantee for 5310 funds for the Odessa District. West Texas Opportunities, Inc. and *EZ RIDER* both serve on the 5310 Advisory Committee, which makes recommendations for transit projects and funding for the Elderly and Disabled program in this region.

Medical Transportation Program – Medical transportation, through necessity, is already a closely monitored and coordinated function within the region. After assuming responsibility for future transportation delivery and program monitoring, the Texas Department of Transportation released a request for proposal for Medical Transportation services beginning June 1, 2006. Previously, the contract was held by Midessa Transportation, LLC for Ector and Midland

Counties, and West Texas Opportunities, Inc. for the remaining 15 counties in the region. West Texas Opportunities developed the response to the request for proposal on behalf of the Permian Basin region. *EZ RIDER* and Midessa were identified as subcontractors in the submitted proposal.

West Texas Opportunities was awarded the contract beginning on June 26, 2006. Agreements were reached with, and between, the two identified subcontractors on administration of responsibilities. (See Appendix D) According to the agreement dated May 8, 2006, Midessa Transportation will be the primary provider for Ector and Midland counties. In the event Midessa Transportation cannot fulfill its obligation for wheelchair clients in the urbanized area, *EZ RIDER* will assume Medicaid transportation responsibilities concerning these clients on a case-by-case basis.

IV. Regional Service Coordination Planning

A. Planning Process and Work Plan

The planning process methodology is to define, measure, analyze, improve and control through the active participation of the identified stakeholders. (See Figure 1)

- Assemble Regional Service Plan Working Group—selecting from the region’s major providers and purchasers of public transportation services, a working group will be established to facilitate coordination efforts.
- Establish Lead Agency—based on the recommendations of the working group, a lead agency will be established to facilitate discussions, write the regional service plan, and subsequently submit the plan to the Texas Transportation Commission.
- Identify Stakeholders—a comprehensive team of entities with a direct interest in the region’s transportation functions will be created. Many, if not all, of the stakeholders will be part of the working group.
- Identify Obstacles—all obstacles, real or perceived, in furthering the coordination effort will be listed. In this identification exercise, a process to either resolve, mitigate or accept obstacles will be devised.
- Gather Data Requirements—relevant data to the formulation of the region’s current operating structure, capacity and capability will be gathered including: 1) operating characteristics of providers; 2) ridership profile; 3) fleet roster; 4) vehicle utilization matrix; 5) revenue profile; and 6) expenditure profile.
- Identify Service Deficiencies and Problems (Data Analysis)—the region’s scope of transportation, services provided and specialized demands will be determined.
- Identify Opportunities for Coordination in the Region (Gap Analysis)—through the use of the fleet profile matrix and financial profile, a determination will be formulated depicting gaps or overlaps in transportation services currently

- provided. A financial evaluation will be made of 5307, 5310 and 5311 funding to find opportunities to assist with the coordination effort.
- Develop Phased Implementation—a plan outlining short-term and long-term goals, system design, participant relationships, budgets, staffing and implementation schedule will be written. Through this plan, coordination of efforts will be prioritized, an implementation program will be designed for each activity and responsibilities assigned.
 - Conduct Community Outreach Program—a community education element will be initiated in conjunction with the phased implementation development step. Public forums will be held in Midland and Odessa, along with several smaller communities in the rural areas.
 - Create Decision Model—questions to be answered include: How far does the region go forward with the coordination effort? Does the region proceed? If so, what is the best fit method of coordination? The outcome of the process will determine what will work best for an agency-to-agency coordination effort: cooperation, joint use arrangements or consolidation.
 - Formulate Financial Plan—financial model to support the course of action derived from the decision model will be developed.
 - Create Performance Monitoring Criteria—key performance areas to evaluate the continuing coordination effort outcome will be built. Key performance areas will have relevant indicators, goals and built-in review period. Overall continuous improvement effort will include repeatable processes, drill down teams and resultant maturation model.
 - Develop Joint Policies and Procedures—system will be written and agreed on by the working group of any coordination effort that includes cooperation of joint services, joint use arrangements or consolidation of resources.
 - Control Overall Process—regular process reviews and improvements of the coordination process will be conducted, so the initial process will continue to work as designed. Built into the initial improvement strategy is a mechanism for continual review. (See Figure 2)

Figure 1 – Process Flow

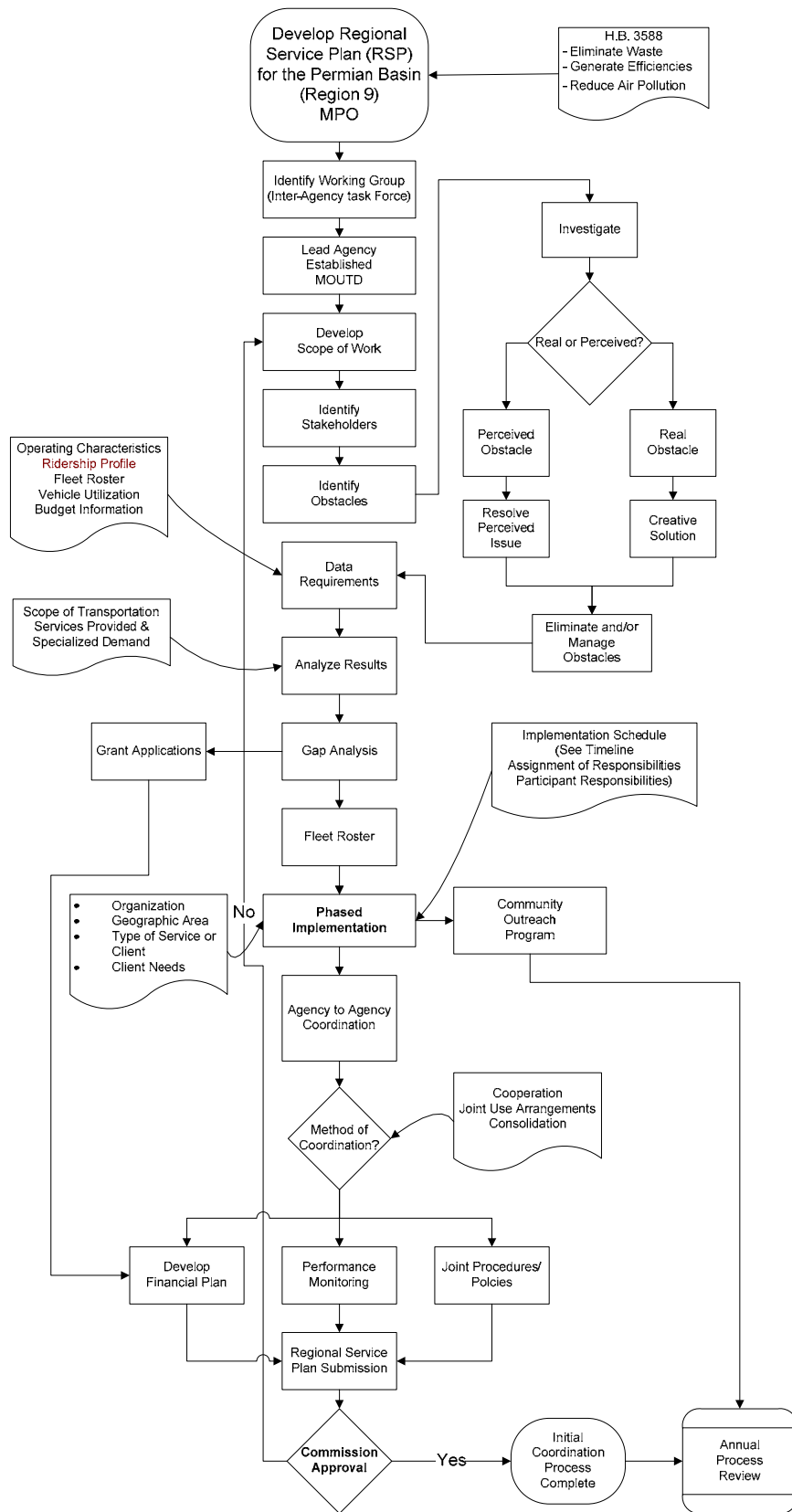
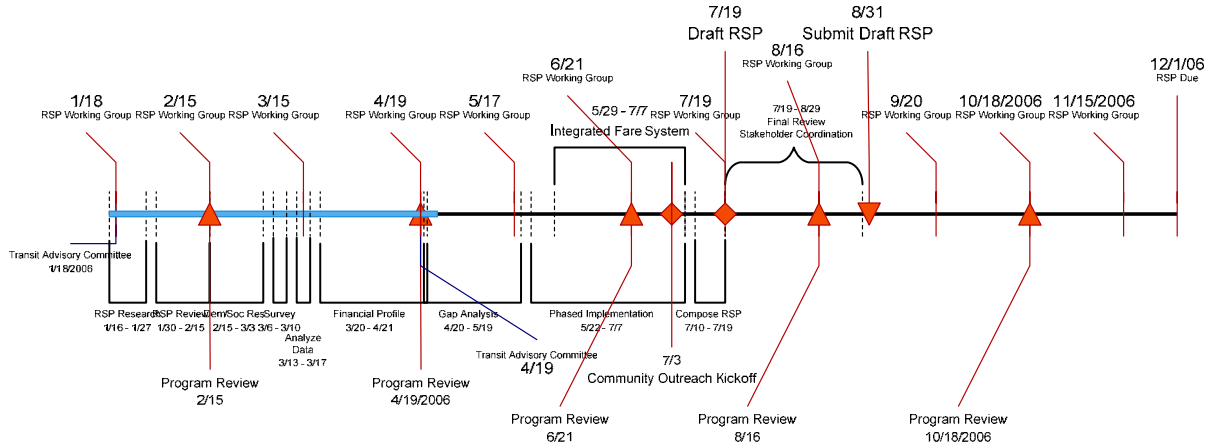


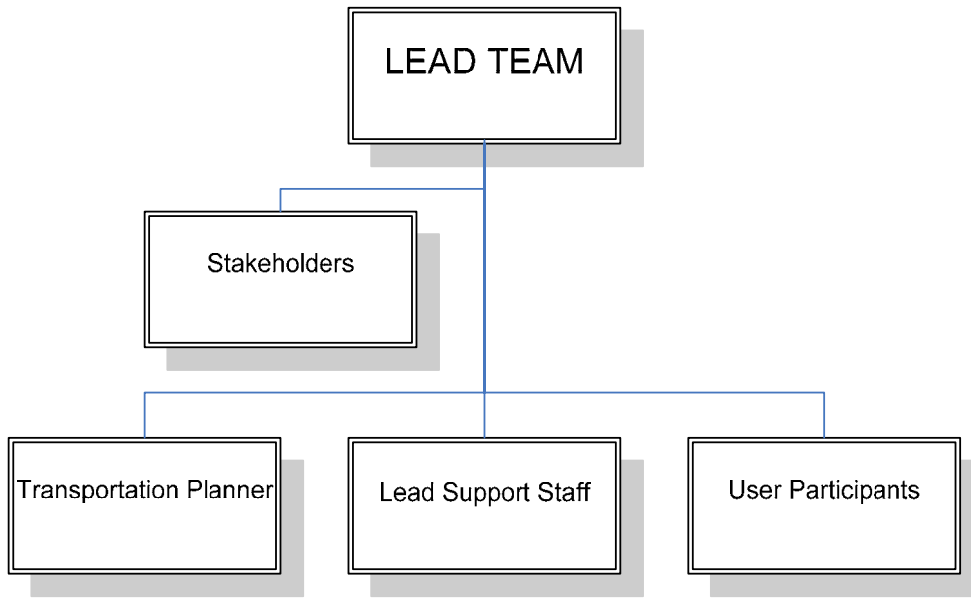
Figure 2 – Timeline



i. Organization

The major planning partners comprising the lead team are *EZ RIDER*, the Midland-Odessa Transportation Organization (MOTOR-MPO), and the Texas Department of Transportation – Odessa District. *EZ RIDER* obtained planning assistance and technical support from the MPO and TxDOT. Other stakeholders, including providers and purchasers of transportation, as well as support staff and end users, have been an integral part of the planning process. (See Figure 3)

Figure 3 – Team Organization



ii. Lead Agency

EZ RIDER was unanimously selected as the lead agency by the Permian Basin working group. The purpose of the lead agency is to establish diverse involvement in planning, coordinating and support implementation throughout the region. The lead agency facilitates and provides inertia to the planning process, and keeps the process focused on regional objectives.

iii. Other Involved Agencies

Midland-Odessa Transportation Organization (MPO)
Texas Department of Transportation – Odessa District
West Texas Opportunities, Inc., Permian Basin Rural Transit District
Midessa Transportation LLC (private for-profit taxi service)
Permian Basin Workforce Development Board
Workforce Network of Midland / Odessa
Area Agency on Aging of the Permian Basin – Regional Planning Commission
Department of Assistive & Rehabilitation Services (DARS)
Permian Basin Community Centers for MHMR
Ector County Senior Services
Community & Senior Services of Midland
Casa de Amigos (senior, social, health/dental, educational services)
Parks Methodist Retirement Village
Midland Community Healthcare System
West Texas VA Healthcare Services
All Aboard America! (private charter operator)
Midland County Sheriff’s Office Crisis Intervention Unit

iv. Committee Structure and Responsibilities

There are no subcommittees at this time.

B. Outreach/Public Involvement Description

Clients – The Regional Service Plan working group for the Permian Basin is an integrated group of providers of transportation, purchasers, and advocacy groups. To ensure the group was a complete representation of the public, the group decided it prudent to bring in members from the local communities representative of the region’s transportation base. Target clients were persons with limited incomes, disabled, older Americans; in essence, all people. Accommodations were made for people with limited English proficiency and physical disabilities. Multiple meeting times for each location were set to accommodate as many participants as possible.

Urban Process – Much like the stakeholder public integration, selecting the target groups was closely in line with Federal Transit Administration SAFETEA-LU implementation guidelines. For Midland, two (2) sites were selected to facilitate public forums: Casa de Amigos and the Midland Senior Center. These sites were selected due to their location on the fixed-route bus lines, and their proximity to persons with limited income, as well as the disabled and the aged. Locations within strong socioeconomic census block groups were not selected.

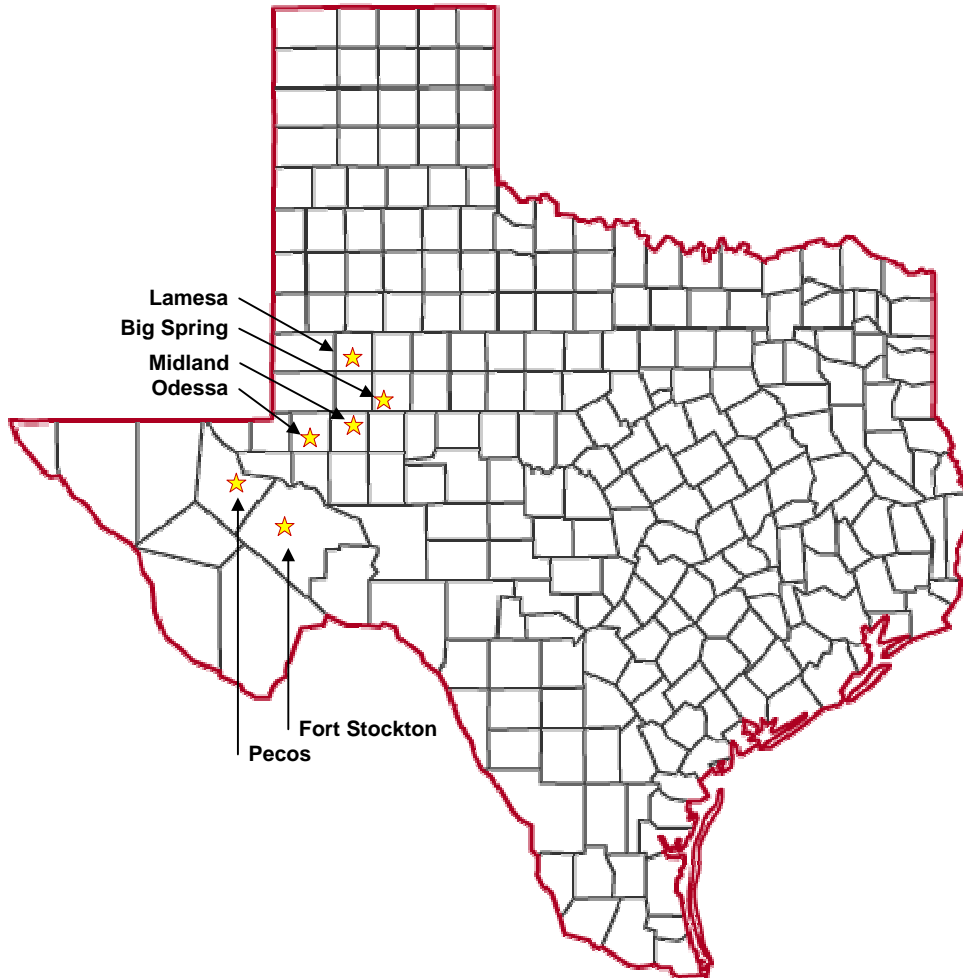
Notices of the public meetings were well publicized to these locations.

A similar process was utilized for Odessa. The Woodson Community Center and Northside Senior Center were selected due to their proximity to bus routes and the target population base. As in Midland, locations with strong economic backgrounds were not selected but the process was well communicated.

The focus of the group was to hold the public forums as close to the target demographic population as possible to encourage attendance and reduce hardship on participants. Locations selected in the Midland and Odessa urban areas were the result of transit needs analysis utilizing Census 2000 block group data. The focus of the analysis was to determine the most urgent needs based on limited income, disabled people, on individuals over the age of 60, and non-availability of personal transportation. Within these target locations, members of the working group, many of them directors of community resources, readily volunteered their facilities.

Rural Process – West Texas Opportunities, Inc led the public forum effort for the rural transit district. Population centers were selected for sites to hold the meetings due to the size of the region's rural transit district – over 23,000 square miles. Population centers included Pecos in Reeves County, Fort Stockton in Pecos County, Big Spring in Howard County, and Lamesa in Dawson County. (See Figure 4) The format of the meetings was identical to that of the urban areas, although the discussions focused more on the rural service.

Figure 4 – Public Forum Locations



Delineation of Information – The following methods were employed to communicate times and locations for the public forums: Notice of Public Forum advertised in newspapers of general circulation, senior service bulletins and website news releases. In addition, flyers were placed on the vehicles operated by *EZ RIDER* and West Texas Opportunities. Flyers were also placed at community centers throughout the region.

Forum Agenda – A brief PowerPoint slide presentation was developed to educate the public on this process; current public transit providers and their associated areas of responsibility; and the importance of public feedback in the process. The same presentation was given in both the urban and rural settings, and opportunity was allowed for questions and comments from those in attendance.

Documentation – During public forums, all participants were requested to sign in when arriving at a briefing location. Forums were electronically recorded to ensure accuracy of participant’s feedback when formulating the public comments section. Other accessible formats for recording comments were made available at each public forum.

V. Coordinated Transportation Plan

A. Goals and Objectives

At the regional level, the intent of H.B. 3588 is to coordinate transportation services through a regional service plan to:

Eliminate waste in the provision of public transportation services. The Permian Basin is currently served by one fixed-route urban transportation provider, *EZ RIDER*, conducting operations in two adjacent cities: Midland and Odessa. The lone rural provider, West Texas Opportunities, Inc., provides demand-response service in the seventeen-county rural transit district, including the West Odessa CDP (census designated place), an unincorporated area of Ector County adjacent to the city of Odessa. Also operating in the Permian Basin are 17 client based providers serving various community service organizations, mostly Area Agency on Aging.

Generate efficiencies that will permit increased levels of service. Via the Permian Basin Regional Service Plan working group, a vehicle inventory summary and utilization matrix will be developed and analyzed. Based on in-depth analysis, the group can then determine the method of coordination to facilitate efficient vehicle employment and effective use of available funds to facilitate coordination. The overall objective is to determine over-lapping capabilities and the coordination method best suited for the region: cooperation, joint use arrangements or consolidation.

Further the state's effort to reduce air pollution. Take advantage of ultra-low sulfur diesel (ULSD), new vehicle emission technologies, and the elimination of overlapping efforts.

Ensure maximum coverage of the service area. Determine through gap analysis social service and general public transportation deficiencies. West Odessa CDP, under urban/rural boundary restrictions, does not have urban transit available although it is adjacent to an existing provider. Midland Community Healthcare Services lacks the ability to move low-income patients along a fixed route door-to-door with partner healthcare providers. Currently, the Veterans Administration healthcare facility in Odessa utilizes a fleet of volunteers and Angel Flight to transport its veterans to the Big Springs VA medical facility and various locations in the region. The goal of this section of the coordination effort is to identify these insufficiencies and address them properly.

Provide a framework for SAFETEA-LU implementation. Elderly Individuals, Individuals with Disabilities, Job Access and Reverse Commute, and New Freedom programs are an inherent part of this process. In essence, the focus of the entire process centers on the government's highest human service and economic progression initiatives.

Use the existing transportation providers. To the maximum extent feasible, existing public transportation providers. In particular, the fixed-route components of the existing networks should be used to meet the clients' transportation

requirements of the state’s social service agencies.

Incremental continuous improvement. This is the final overarching objective of this document. Integration of community leaders, target socioeconomic aggregation, advocates and the general public into a cohesive team contributing to advancement of social and economic reforms in the region.

B. Regional Needs Assessment

In the Permian Basin region, urban ridership frequently consists of riders in age groups 21 to 39 (47%) and 50+ years old (23%). The majority are lower income individuals seeking transportation to work (36%), shopping centers (26%) and health care facilities (13%). A significant portion is disabled people utilizing the convenience of ADA equipped buses and young mothers with children. Senior citizens, regardless of economic background, who normally depend on other family members for medical and shopping transportation needs are increasingly able to find their independence through urban transit and are quickly becoming a major factor. The major differentiation between urban and rural transportation user profiles is distances.

Aging and income are the primary driving factors of rural transportation needs. While all populations in the Permian Basin show an increase in the median age, rural populations are increasing at a significantly higher rate than urban populations. Two standout users of rural transportation are people 60 and older and young single mothers. The highest needs of these two groups are shopping and healthcare – a high propensity exists that the frequency of these needs going unmet greatly increases without rural transportation providers.

Perhaps the most influential factor in a dynamic ridership profile, urban and rural, is people with disabilities and senior citizens. Increased adherence to conditions in the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) has empowered the disabled segment of the population to become more mobile and independent. The Texas Home Living Program (TxHmL) liberates the mentally disabled person to live an independent life and relies heavily on public transit. However, the largest sustained growth will be the Baby Boom generation (people born between 1946 and 1964) currently at 106,265 for the Permian Basin. Coupled with the fact that Texas is one of three of the fastest growing states (California and Florida are the other two), it is safe to assume that the median age of ridership will continue to increase, as well as usage. As age increases the desire to continue to provide for one’s own transportation needs decreases as clearly stated in an American Public Transportation Association study concerning aging and driving.

Assessment Methodology – Perhaps the most widely accepted transit needs assessment in the industry is based on four socioeconomic factors:

- Zero-Vehicle Households
- Elderly Population
- Mobility Limited
- Below Poverty Level

The key to this analysis is “need,” not desire—this must be kept in mind while

digesting this form of data. Although, the primary focus on public transportation is to increase ridership of all economic classes, needs are primary factors in the overall equation. This is strongly indicated by H.B. 3588, New Freedom, Job Access and Reverse Commute, etc.

Needs are weighted based on the ranges for the entire region. Zero percent being the baseline of no substantial need indicated to the highest percentage in each of the four categories. For example, Loving County reflects no one person below the poverty level and Reeves County has the highest poverty rate at 28.9%. Therefore, the range for poverty in the Permian Basin is 0 to 28.9%.

The next step was to break the range into six equal parts assigning a rank to each. Poverty was divided into six establishing a deviation of 4.81%. The six parts are as follows:

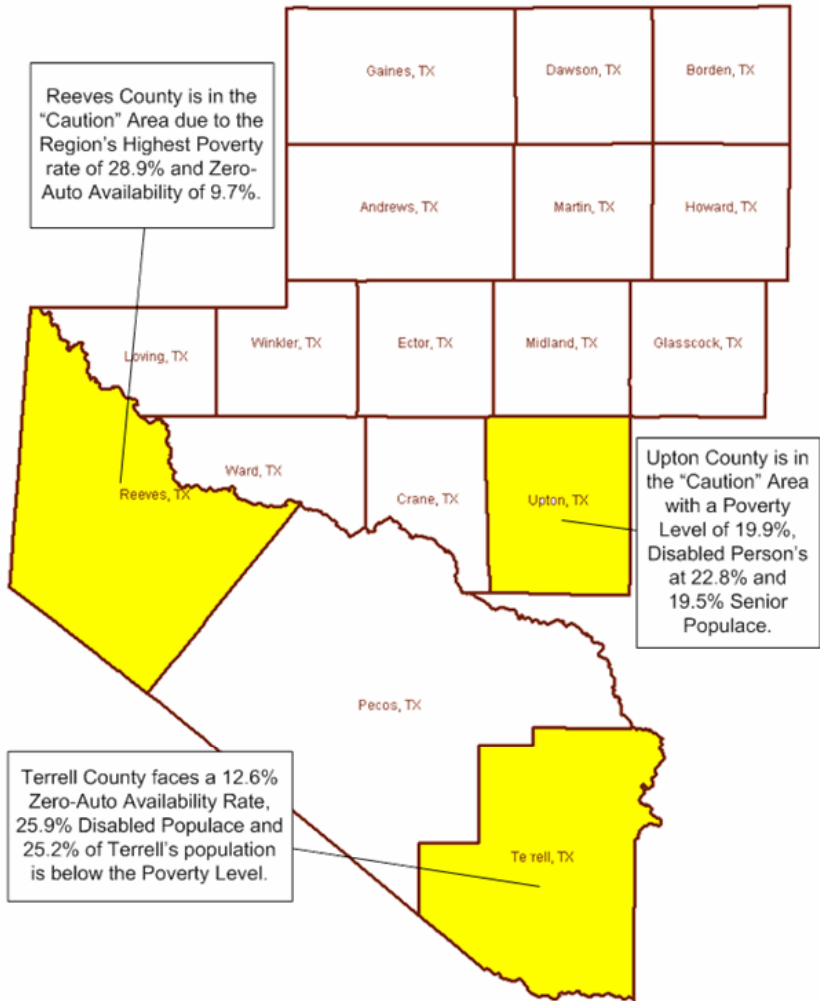
Range	Rank
0% to 4.8%	1
4.9% to 9.6%	2
9.7% to 14.4%	3
14.5% to 19.2%	4
19.3% to 24.0%	5
24.1% to 28.9%	6

Each part is then assigned a weight to be summed to determine the overall transportation need; a simple process enabling the working group quick reference in identification of areas of concern. Each county was assessed using U.S. Census 2000 data. Midland and Odessa cities were assessed using the same data, but at the block group level. (See Table 3)

For all the factors to remain constant, U.S. Census 2000 data was employed.

Table 3 – Transit Needs Assessment

Transportation Need Assessment			
Zero Vehicle Availability			
	Range		Rank
	0.0% 2.1%	→	1
	2.2% 4.2%	→	2
	4.3% 6.3%	→	3
	6.4% 8.4%	→	4
	8.5% 10.5%	→	5
	10.6% 12.6%	→	6
Senior Citizens 60 +			
	Range		Rank
	13.2% 15.1%	→	1
	15.2% 17.0%	→	2
	17.1% 18.9%	→	3
	19.0% 20.8%	→	4
	20.9% 22.7%	→	5
	22.8% 24.6%	→	6
Americans with Disabilities			
	Range		Rank
	11.1% 14.7%	→	1
	14.8% 18.3%	→	2
	18.4% 21.9%	→	3
	22.0% 25.5%	→	4
	25.6% 29.1%	→	5
	29.2% 32.8%	→	6
Below Poverty Level			
	Range		Rank
	0.0% 4.8%	→	1
	4.9% 9.6%	→	2
	9.7% 14.4%	→	3
	14.5% 19.2%	→	4
	19.3% 24.0%	→	5
	24.1% 28.9%	→	6
Overall Score			
	Range		Rank
	4 7	→	1
	8 11	→	2
	12 14	→	3
	15 18	→	4
	19 21	→	5
	22 24	→	6



Area Description	County FIPS	Area M2	Total Pop.	Zero-Vehicle Households			Senior Citizens 60 & Over			Mobility Limited			Below Poverty Level			Overall Score	Final Rank
				#	%	Rank	#	%	Rank	#	%	Rank	#	%	Rank		
Andrews County	3	1501	13,004	312	6.8%	4	2,135	16.4%	2	2154	16.6%	2	2,117	16.4%	4	12	2
Borden County	33	899	729	4	1.4%	1	169	23.2%	6	81	11.1%	1	102	14.0%	3	11	2
Crane County	103	786	3,996	83	6.1%	3	606	15.2%	2	813	20.3%	3	532	13.4%	3	11	2
Dawson County	115	902	14,985	375	7.9%	4	2,693	18.0%	3	2718	18.1%	2	2,494	19.7%	5	14	2
Ector County	135	901	121,123	3267	7.5%	4	17,645	14.6%	1	20604	17.0%	2	22,310	18.7%	4	11	2
Gaines County	165	1502	14,467	208	4.4%	2	2,015	13.9%	1	2264	15.6%	2	3,119	21.7%	5	10	2
Glasscock County	173	901	1,406	13	2.7%	2	186	13.2%	1	199	14.2%	1	207	14.7%	4	8	1
Howard County	227	903	33,627	1065	9.4%	5	6,257	18.6%	3	6164	18.3%	2	5,366	18.6%	4	14	2
Loving County	301	673	67	0	0.0%	1	15	22.4%	5	22	32.8%	6	0	0.0%	1	13	2
Martin County	317	915	4,746	124	7.6%	4	830	17.5%	3	610	12.9%	1	872	18.7%	4	12	2
Midland County	329	900	116,009	2578	6.0%	3	17,567	15.1%	1	17459	15.0%	2	14,758	12.9%	3	9	2
Pecos County	371	4764	16,809	341	6.6%	4	2,477	14.7%	1	3749	22.3%	4	3,003	20.4%	5	14	2
Reeves County	389	2636	13,137	398	9.7%	5	2,218	16.9%	2	2380	18.1%	2	3,469	28.9%	6	15	3
Terrell County	443	2358	1,081	56	12.6%	6	266	24.6%	6	280	25.9%	5	271	25.2%	6	23	4
Upton County	461	1242	3,404	81	6.4%	4	665	19.5%	4	777	22.8%	4	669	19.9%	5	17	3
Ward County	475	835	10,909	321	8.1%	4	2,040	18.7%	3	2042	18.7%	3	1,886	17.9%	4	14	2
Winkler County	495	841	7,173	152	5.9%	3	1,319	18.4%	3	1384	19.3%	3	1,314	18.7%	4	13	2

i. Transportation Resources: Overlaps and Gaps

Duplicated Service Delivery – Clearly defined boundaries exist between urban and rural transit operations in the Permian Basin. Within these boundaries two professional transit operators provide service. *EZ RIDER* is the urban fixed-route and paratransit provider. The Permian Basin Rural Transit District is operated by West Texas Opportunities, Inc., which executes demand-response services with stock and ADA equipped vehicles. A supplement to both public service providers is Midessa Transportation, LLC, a contract provider for Medicaid in the demand-response role for both Midland and Ector Counties – rural and urbanized areas.

West Texas VA Healthcare System – serves a region of over 72,000 M². Over 23,000 M² is in the Permian Basin Regional Planning Commission (PBRPC) consisting of more than 29,000 veterans. Veterans requiring VA healthcare are normally sent from satellite facilities/clinics to the VA Hospital located in Big Spring. A high percentage (no empirical data available) of limited income veterans seeking this service are without transportation or may be restricted from operating a vehicle due to their medical condition. Normally these veterans find themselves using an eclectic network of volunteers and organizations in search of transportation services perpetuating hardships on both the VA system and the veterans. Although the intent of these organizations is admirable, the outcome is less than desirable.

Medical Community Healthcare Services – House Bill 757 that established the Health Disparities Task Force was authored and sponsored by Representative Garnet Coleman - District 147, Harris County, and Senator David Bernson, District 4. The bill was signed by Governor Rick Perry on June 17, 2001 and became effective on September 1, 2001. The Health Disparities Task Force was established to eliminate health and health access disparities in Texas. It is administratively attached to the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS), with the Office for the Elimination of Health Disparities (OEHD) providing staff and facilities to assist the task force in performing its duties.

The purpose of the task force is to assist DSHS in accomplishing the following goals among multicultural, disadvantaged, and regional populations:

- Eliminate health and health access disparities;
- Reorganize department programs to eliminate those disparities;
- Investigate and report on issues related to health and health access disparities; and
- Develop short-term and long-term strategies to eliminate health and health access with a focus on reorganizing department programs to eliminate those disparities.

The task force shall monitor the progress of DSHS in:

- Eliminating the health and health access disparities;
- Reorganizing department programs to eliminate the disparities; and
- Advising on the implementation of any targeted programs or funding authorized by the legislature to address health and health access

disparities.

Midland Community Healthcare Services is the local Health Disparities Task Force lead agency serving Midland. In addition, Dr. Hilton Perez, CEO of Midland Community Healthcare Services and Ms. Vicki Hailey, Midland City Council District 2, are the lead executives in the West Texas Healthcare Consortium. These organizations have voiced interest in dedicated medical routes in the urbanized areas. Currently, the Consortium serves the rural region on an outreach basis with limited mobility. In urbanized areas, the patients use either their own transportation or public transit to meet with their healthcare providers. This has raised some concern with the Health Disparities Task Force.

A high number of patients using urban transit may be in a reduced state of awareness and in a condition that would not allow for vigorous activity, or with small children. In any of these physical or emotional states, situational awareness is significantly decreased exponentially raising the risks of accidents. Most urban bus stop locations are located on the street. Although care is given when planning stops to locate stops in the best locations for rider safety, it is not always feasible to take into consideration those with diminished capacities.

Permian Basin Community Centers for MHMR – does not have a transportation budget or funding sources. The Texas Home Living Program (TxHmL) liberates the mentally disabled person to help live an independent life and relies heavily on public transit. Transportation costs for public transit services are subtracted from the support at home living rate.

MHMR in West Texas has developed a unique process to empower its client base and family support members. Initially, clients are categorically indoctrinated to public transit – many requiring paratransit certification. Those requiring paratransit certification are integrated into the fixed-route system over a period of time as determined by the caregiver and family support member. This process has significantly reduced the burden on paratransit services in Midland and provided a social atmosphere for the client.

West Odessa Census Designated Place (CDP) – although adjacent to the City of Odessa, the CDP, with a 2004 estimated population of 18,616, does not enjoy the benefit of urban transit service. At best, individuals may make their way to a major bus stop at Walmart on the west side of Odessa and access the urban system from there. Also, West Texas Opportunities, Inc. has provided demand-response service to this unincorporated area, as part of its rural operation, all along.

Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) & New Freedom – Job Access grants are intended to provide new transit service to assist welfare recipients and other low-income individuals in getting to jobs, training, and child care. Reverse Commute grants are designed to develop transit services to transport workers to suburban job sites. The intent of the New Freedom Initiative is to tear down the barriers to equality for persons with disabilities that remain after the implementation of the Americans with Disabilities Act. TEA-21 and subsequent SAFETEA-LU apportionments have not been utilized to fund these initiatives

locally to date. SAFETEA-LU requires JARC and New Freedom projects be developed from a coordinated plan beginning in FY2007.

Inaccessible Vehicles – All vehicles in the *EZ RIDER* fleet comply with the American’s with Disabilities Act for wheelchair accessibility and safety. Sixty-two (62) percent of the West Texas Opportunities, Inc. vehicle fleet is equipped for wheelchair transportation. Five (5) percent of Midessa Transportation’s fleet is wheelchair accessible.

ii. Strategies to Address Gaps and Needs

Duplicated Service Delivery – Within the Permian Basin region, public transit service is not duplicated.

West Texas VA Healthcare System – The stakeholders representing the Veterans Administration and veterans groups have voiced concerns over a dedicated, organized transit network assisting veterans. Although a plethora of options exist, funding sources may not. This unmet need will be added to the Regional Service Plan’s agenda for further review.

Medical Community Healthcare Services – A medical transit route providing door-to-door service within the medical community is not currently feasible for the urban fixed-route provider to accommodate without additional infrastructure and funding sources. Yet, it remains an unmet need of the region and will be added to the Regional Service Plan for further review.

Permian Basin Community Centers for MHMR – The unmet need for clients of MHMR is transit funding. This will be added to the Regional Service Plan for further review for funding opportunities.

West Odessa Census Designated Place (CDP) – It is possible that some level of fixed-route service in West Odessa for the general public, particularly senior citizens, persons with disabilities and low-income individuals, may be provided, although adequate and sustained funding from Ector County will be a consideration. This, too, will be added to the Regional Service Plan for further review.

Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) & New Freedom A process of project identification and utilization must be developed for the Permian Basin. Since the Midland-Odessa urban area offers a substantial amount of entry level job positions, target populations and locations must be researched to determine effective use of program funding.

Inaccessible Vehicles – Based on client and transportation type, *EZ RIDER* and West Texas Opportunities are adequately equipped for transporting persons with disabilities, including potential JARC and New Freedom initiatives. Midessa Transportation has a much lower rate of equipped vehicles, but has taken steps to ensure any surges of wheelchair clients is handled under subcontract by *EZ RIDER*.

iii. Barriers and Constraints

Perhaps the most difficult issue the region has faced has been the ability to identify barriers and constraints. Traditionally, the region's transportation providers have worked together emphasizing public service. A good example that demonstrates collaboration is the region's Medical Transportation Program and how providers worked together within the community structure to fulfill identified needs. However, even in the best circumstances barriers and constraints do exist, at least fundamentally. Identified below are the obstructions and restrictions the region will need to overcome or work within to become fully coordinated.

Barriers:

Legislation

- Definition of urbanized areas prevents the Region from becoming truly "seamless" in the delivery of public transportation services.
- The Older Americans Act Amendments § 315, 42 U.S.C. § 3030c-2 (2000) has no provision to waiver contributions, although administration of such a program could cause an undue burden on the Area Agency on Aging.
- Uniform Grant Management Standards prevents [highly discouraged] resource pooling of Permian Basin Community Center's (PBCC) equipment funded from Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) and Department of Aging and Disability Services. PBCC considers itself a purchaser of transportation and not a provider.
- Title 49 U.S.C. §53 Grant Program limitations, including matching ratios, cycles, sharing, and administration limitations.

Alternative Fuel Requirements

- Alternative fuel requirements for rural areas present an exceptionally difficult issue within the region's current infrastructure. They prevent the use of the appropriate vehicle for the area, greatly increasing the cost of operation and lessening service to the clients.

Constraints:

Authority or Influence Objections

- An underlying sense of pride in one's jurisdiction may prevent one from honest coordination efforts.

Political Support and Knowledge

- Representatives' knowledge of key transportation issues, particularly

the need for more resources for transit.

- Ensure that legislators and those involved in the appropriations process understand the distinction between federal and state funds and the importance of increases in state funding independent of any increases in federal appropriations.

Geography of the Permian Basin

- Over 23,000 square miles with 378,000 inhabitants. The extremely low population density of 16.1 people per square mile is a substantial constraint.
- Opportunities to employ efficiencies of scale are seldom presented.

Communications

- Remoteness of the region perpetuates sparse communications network resulting in weak or no reception for VHF radios and cellular.
- Presents dispatch challenges contributing to inefficient operations.

Information Sharing

- The State's transportation providers may have one of three software packages for scheduling/planning that do not integrate.
- Standardized provider technology is essential and poses a significant constraint.

Human Resources

- Employee retention is a challenge in an area that is driven largely by the oil industry and that has a lack of affordable housing.
- Qualified applicants are difficult to find in a hard market, particularly when other higher-paying employers have lax or nonexistent hiring standards.

C. Coordination Action Plan

i. Actions/Projects/Services Descriptions

Draw Other Participants – There are still transportation providers and health and human service agencies in the region that have not yet become involved in the Regional Service Plan process. The working group strongly feels the responsibility to include such potential participants in future discussions, and each member has been empowered to reach out to others in their respective spheres of influence. As a result, new members are added to the working group about every month. This will be

an ongoing process as the Plan continues to develop.

Increased Marketing – The Regional Service Plan process revealed that there is still much to be done to raise awareness of public transportation, particularly in the rural areas. For example, many informed individuals and entities in Midland-Odessa were not aware of West Texas Opportunities, Inc. Permian Basin Rural Transit District. The public forums that were conducted, and the generous media coverage that resulted, provided increased knowledge and awareness of the services that were already available to the general public. This, too, will be an ongoing process. *EZ RIDER*, which has always received excellent publicity and is extremely well known in the urbanized areas, may be able to help facilitate this.

Federal Grants – The planning partners in the Permian Basin region are interested in working together to pursue additional federal resources (i.e., JARC and New Freedom funds) that may help to enhance existing projects, or facilitate coordination projects as these are identified.

Joint Procurement – There may be some added benefit in several agencies in the region cooperating on joint procurements, particularly for vehicles and intelligent technology applications, not only for the purpose of purchasing power, but also for the potential increase in coordination capabilities.

Maintenance Agreement – Similar to the fueling agreement, the two public transportation providers in the region would like to explore the feasibility of entering into an agreement that would allow rural buses to receive preventive maintenance and repair service at the *EZ RIDER* facility. Currently, West Texas Opportunities, Inc. relies on maintenance services provided at several privately-owned garages throughout the region, which may not always be reliable, accountable or cost effective. Using the *EZ RIDER* facility, which is federally funded and accountable to both the Federal Transit Administration and the Texas Department of Transportation, may provide some relief for the rural provider, as its vehicles criss-cross through the region.

Sharing of Resources – The working group expressed a desire for a “blurring of the lines” associated with urban and rural transit boundaries, as well as between agencies themselves, so that individual trips could be accommodated in a more coordinated fashion. For example, *EZ RIDER* cannot operate outside the urbanized area (basically, the city limits), and TRAX cannot originate trips or make multiple stops within the city limits. Thus, only through a series of transfers from one provider vehicle to another – which are complicated to arrange and not very desirable from a customer viewpoint – can a person move back and forth across the urban/rural lines. The Permian Basin would like to explore the option of allowing *EZ RIDER* vehicles to deviate short distances outside the city limits on a case-by-case basis to assist West Texas Opportunities with certain trips; and allowing idle TRAX vehicles to assist *EZ RIDER* with

some of its ADA complementary paratransit trips.

Intermodal Facilities – It may be highly advantageous to have facilities in the urbanized areas of Midland and Odessa where the various providers could meet for the purpose of facilitating transfers from one mode of service to another. Possible participants include the urban and rural transit systems, intercity buses, and local taxi service providers. This idea was mentioned several times in the public forums that were held.

Intercity Service – Perhaps the most popular comment received at the public forums, at least in the urbanized areas, was the desire for service between Midland and Odessa. Separated by some 20 miles, there is almost no urban development and growth between the two cities, with Midland International Airport – situated halfway between Midland and Odessa – the only true destination that may require public transit service. While the actual need for such service has not been established, there may be some legitimacy to the requests to travel back and forth between cities for work, shopping and medical trips.

Up until now, in the urbanized area, all efforts have been directed to developing and maturing *EZ RIDER* in the two cities, and the request for intercity service has been regarded as future service expansion of the urban system. It was thought that once the two independent systems were well established, the idea of connecting the two systems could be explored. More recently, the TxDOT Odessa District office has propounded that the rural provider may also have a significant role in such service. And most certainly, the intercity bus carrier – Greyhound Bus Lines – which is already providing limited service between the two cities would need to be involved in these planning decisions.

ii. **Prioritization/Implementation**

The vast majority of proposed actions, projects and services in the Coordination Action Plan are of such a nature that they can be implemented rather informally; mainly by further collaboration between the interested parties. For example, a potential maintenance agreement between *EZ RIDER* and West Texas Opportunities would likely require only continued discussions about administration, logistics and level of service. This would not be a difficult process, since these two agencies already communicate openly and honestly, and have a very good working relationship.

There are, however, at least three (3) proposed projects that are of high interest in the region, and which would require a more formal process of implementation – likely including the allocation of additional resources that have not yet been tapped by the region. These are prioritized below:

1. *Sharing of Resources* – a coordinated way to improve the quality of service that is provided to the end user; with traditional service boundaries “softened,” to ultimately benefit the client,

particularly persons with disabilities. **A potential use of New Freedom funding.**

2. *Intercity Service* – a desired service for two cities in such close proximity to each other; with residents who live in one city and work, or have shopping, educational and medical-related trips in the other. A pilot program to demonstrate the validity of such a project and to determine the most appropriate way to provide the service may be beneficial. **A potential use of JARC funding.**
3. *Intermodal Facilities* – a key to transportation coordination between various providers; and an important logistical component to intercity service; to serve as a “hub” to connect the two independent urban systems and provide a waiting location for rural passengers. **A potential use of New Freedom funding.**

iii. **Schedule**

These projects will be added to the Permian Basin Region’s agenda for further review, and will be developed and implemented as additional funding is identified and secured.

D. **Inter-Regional Coordination**

Recognizing that there is a need for public transportation across regional boundaries, the Permian Basin Region working group has made an effort to reach out to adjoining regions, including South Plains (Region 2) to the north, Concho Valley (Region 10) to the east, and Upper Rio Grande (Region 8) to the west. In some cases, this has entailed attending one another’s planning meetings and public forums during the current planning process, and otherwise sharing information. However, West Texas Opportunities, Inc. has long coordinated transportation services with adjacent regions, particularly Region 2, to ultimately benefit clients who were traveling to and from Lubbock. It is likely that the Permian Basin can build on this experience to enhance the transportation network that is currently in operation across the region – and inter-regionally.

In addition, the TxDOT Odessa District office – an influential member of the Permian Basin working group – has also initiated an effort to bring together multiple regions in West Texas to discuss the possibility of securing congressional earmarks and pursuing joint procurement strategies that may benefit this part of the State on an inter-regional basis. This facilitation grew out of the current planning process as well.

E. Action Plan Assessment and Evaluation

Through the Permian Basin coordination effort, the region's transportation providers will strive to seek positive changes to community in the desired direction through a series of common industry key performance indicators.

Performance Indicators – The Permian Basin Region will report common industry key performance indicators to strive for specific performance measures:

- Number of passengers carried per service hour
- Road call per miles traveled
- Complaints per passengers carried
- Traffic accidents (preventable and non-preventable) per miles traveled
- Passenger accidents and incidents per passengers carried
- Passenger miles
- Vehicle Miles
- Passenger miles per trip
- Passenger miles per passenger
- Revenue per hour

Performance Measures – It is the intention of the group to simply track applicable information for at least the first year of coordination. Once a baseline has been established, the group will work to develop numerical performance standards and future performance goals. Some goals are abstract in nature and are more difficult to directly measure.

- Number of passenger Trips (*Higher*)
- Number of passenger trips per service area population (*Higher*)
- Passenger trips per vehicle mile (*Higher*)
- Passenger trips per vehicle hour (*Higher*)
- Number of driver hours per passenger trips (*Lower*)
- Number of administration staff hours per passengers trip (*Lower*)
- Cost per vehicle hour (*Lower*)
- Cost per vehicle mile (*Lower*)
- Cost per passenger trip (*Lower*)
- Urban coverage area (*Higher*)
- Rural coverage area (*Higher*)

Community Benefits (abstract in nature)

- Economic Activity (*Higher*)
- Economic Growth (*Higher*)
- Nursing Home admissions per 1,000 population (*Lower*)

Joint Policies and Procedures – If the coordination effort requires cross functional operations, then joint policies and procedures should be developed and these documents should be agreed on by all of the transportation providers involved.

F. Continuing/Sustaining Coordination Plan

i. Continuation Strategies

Once the initial plan is developed and submitted to the State, the Permian Basin Region working group intends to continue to meet at least quarterly the first year to review, discuss and evaluate the current coordination action plan, and determine what additional actions, projects or strategies need to be developed or pursued.

Since there is no duplication of effort evident in the Permian Basin at this time, and no new services than can be initiated without additional allocations of funds, the group will focus on how to incrementally improve the services that are already being provided with existing resources. The objective here will be to do more, not with less, but with what is currently available.

ii. Plan Update Cycle/Process

The Permian Basin Region will update its plan semi-annually the first year (2007), based upon reviews that are conducted at the quarterly meetings, and so that identified opportunities that may require action early on in the process can be expedited.

Thereafter, the plan will be revisited and updated annually by the Region, with submissions to MOTOR, TxDOT and FTA, as required.

VI. Appendices

A. Provider Inventory Summary

The dedicated equipment inventory for Region 9 public transit providers is summarized in **Table 4**. Included in this table is Midessa Transportation, which is primarily a privately owned taxi business working with Medicaid clients.

Table 4 – Inventory Summary

Major Providers					
Agency	Service Type	Inventory	ADA	Hours of Operation	Days of Operation
<i>EZ RIDER</i>	Fixed Route	(19) 25' 19 Passenger (4) 32' 30 Passenger	Yes Yes	6:15 a.m. 8:15 p.m. &	Mon-Fri & Sat
		(19) 25' 19 Passenger (4) 32' 30 Passenger	Yes Yes	6:15 a.m. 6:15 p.m.	
West Texas Opportunities (WTO,I)	Demand Response	(1) 6 Passenger	Yes	7:00 a.m. 7:00 p.m.	Mon-Sat
		(8) 7 Passenger	Yes		
		(18) 7 Passenger	No		
		(6) 9 Passenger	Yes		
		(3) 10 Passenger	Yes		
		(1) 12 Passenger	Yes		
		(6) 12 Passenger	No		
		(4) 14 Passenger	Yes		
		(1) 14 Passenger	No		
		(1) 15 Passenger	Yes		
		(5) 15 Passenger	No		
(1) 17 Passenger	Yes				
(1) 18 Passenger	Yes				
(14) 20 Passenger	Yes				
Midessa Transportation, LLC	Demand Response	(31) 4 Passenger (2) 4 Passenger (1) 5 Passenger (4) 9 Passenger	No Yes Yes Yes	24 Hour	7 Days a Week

In addition to the public transportation providers, the region has several agencies that have state-funded vehicles for client transportation (See Table 5). Area Agency on Aging has an eclectic mix of vehicles used by the region's senior centers on an ad hoc basis and of various configurations and age.

Table 5 – Client-Based Providers

Provider	Area
Community and Senior Services of Midland	Midland
Ector County Senior Center	Odessa
Midland Association for Retard Citizens	Midland
Balmorehea Senior Citizens Center	Balmorehea
Crane County Senior Citizens Center	Crane
Parks Methodist Retirement Village	Odessa
Martin County Senior Center	Stanton
West Texas Center for MHMR	Monahans
Pecos Senior Center	Pecos

Rankin Senior Citizens Services, Inc.	Rankin
St. John's Episcopal Retirement Home	Odessa
Ward County-Grand Falls Senior Citizens	Grand Falls
Terrell County Senior Citizens Transportation Program	Sanderson
Ward County Senior Services Center	Monahans

Table 6 lists the various agencies that purchase bus passes and tickets from *EZ RIDER* for their clients.

Table 6 – Purchase of Fare Media

Agency	Average Monthly Purchase
Department of Assistive and Rehabilitation Services	\$50
Midland Judicial District CSCD	\$100
Texas Youth Commission	\$100
Permian Basin Community Centers	\$510
Permian Basin Workforce (PBRPC)	\$815

ANALYSIS

Vehicle Utilization (See Table 7)

West Texas Opportunities, Inc. (WTO,I) operates a fleet of 63 vehicles, mostly motor buses of varying capacity. Forty of these vehicles are equipped for Americans with Disabilities. WTO,I employs established business relationships perpetuating competitive, cost-effective maintenance throughout the Permian Basin.

- Vehicles are stationed in twelve geographically strategic locations. Opportunity for vehicle coordination is not feasible. Extremely limited downtime, mostly overnight hours, coupled with vast distances offers little time to employ elsewhere.
- Maintenance infrastructure, although eclectic, better serves the community through a grass roots network of dedicated service providers.
- Vehicles dispatch out of 12 locations throughout the Permian Basin.
- Replacement: The fleet operated by WTO,I is aging rapidly. Programmed vehicle replacement is currently in review with the TxDOT Odessa District.

EZ RIDER operates a fleet of 23 motor buses – 19, 25-ft. cutaway and four industrial grade 32-ft. vehicles. All vehicles are equipped in accordance with Americans with Disabilities guidelines. Eleven vehicles directly support 12 fixed routes in Midland and Odessa. Paratransit operations are supported by two cutaway buses – at times three depending on the demand. Two buses are scheduled for preventive maintenance daily. The remaining six vehicles serve as backup or special purpose.

- Pre-trips are performed daily, Monday through Saturday, at approximately 5:30 a.m., prior to the buses going into line service.

- Vehicles dispatch out of a central location located in Odessa, Texas.
- A maintenance staff, under the direction of a maintenance foreman, performs preventive and required maintenance daily, Monday through Saturday.
- Vehicles are washed and fueled by attendants at the main facility nightly, Monday through Saturday.
- Replacement: Maintenance costs are rapidly escalating as the initial fleet reaches lifecycle midpoint. Programmed replacement is planned based on federal, state and local share funding, and the approval of the Midland and Odessa City Councils.

Midessa Transportation, LLC is a privately owned entity operating taxi service in Ector and Midland Counties. Included in their operating areas are the cities of Odessa and Midland. Midessa operates a fleet of 38 vehicles – some equipped for persons with disabilities. Midessa operates its fleet seven days a week, year long. Midessa is included in this document because they are a Medicaid subcontractor to West Texas Opportunities, Inc.

B. Public Outreach Activities Summary

July 11, 2006

Midland Senior Center
3301 W. Illinois
Midland, TX
10:00 a.m.

Total in attendance: 14

Comments received: Need for transportation for veterans back & forth between Midland and Big Spring; need for medical and senior transportation from the rural areas into the urban areas.

July 11, 2006

Midland Senior Center
3301 W. Illinois
Midland, TX
7:00 p.m.

Total in attendance: 0

Comments received: None

July 13, 2006

Casa de Amigos
1101 E. Garden Lane
Midland, TX
10:00 a.m.

Total in attendance: 28

Comments received: Need for intercity service; need for longer service hours; need for Sunday service; need for more covered passenger shelters.

July 13, 2006

Casa de Amigos
1101 E. Garden Lane
Midland, TX
7:00 p.m.

Total in attendance: 1

Comments received: Praise for *EZ RIDER* service; need for intercity service.

July 25, 2006

Northside Senior Center
1225 N. Adams

Odessa, TX
10:00 a.m.

Total in attendance: 28

Comments received: Lack of transportation for seniors from Odessa to Midland; West Texas Opportunities (TRAX) cannot originate trips within the urbanized areas; establish a “hub” for EZ RIDER and TRAX vehicles to facilitate transfers from rural to urban service, and vice versa; create countywide transit authority to tie together all transportation modes; need for intercity service; difficulty making reservations for TRAX service.

July 25, 2006

Northside Senior Center
1225 N. Adams
Odessa, TX
7:00 p.m.

Total in attendance: 0

Comments received: None

July 26, 2006

Pecos Senior Center
119 Cedar Street
Pecos, TX
11:00 a.m.

Total in attendance: 0

Questions asked: None

July 26, 2006

Pecos County Community Action Agency
100 South Jackson
Ft. Stockton, TX
2:00 p.m.

Total in attendance: 5

Questions asked: What transportation services are available in Pecos County right now? Will Medical Transportation ever be provided 24/7? Is *EZ RIDER* service provided 24 hours a day? Why do we have to call the Monahans office for trips? How many vehicles do you have in Ft. Stockton? Is your service door-to-door? What is a reasonable amount of advance time to call for a ride?

July 27, 2006

Woodson Community Center
1010 E. Murphy
Odessa, TX

10:00 a.m.

Total in attendance: 5

Comments received: Need for longer service hours; need for Sunday service; need for intercity service; unaware of TRAX service.

July 27, 2006

West Texas Opportunities, Inc.
603 N. 4th St.
Lamesa, TX
11:00 a.m.

Total in attendance: 9

Questions asked: Does *EZ RIDER* provide service 24/7?

July 27, 2006

Howard County Library
500 S. Main
Big Spring, TX
2:00 p.m.

Total in attendance: 5

Questions asked: Do you have free service for veterans? What are the days and hours of service? How far in advance do we need to call for a trip? Who serves on the coordination committee and can any agency attend?

July 27, 2006

Woodson Community Center
1010 E. Murphy
Odessa, TX
7:00 p.m.

Total in attendance: 3

Comments received: Need for intercity service; need to extend routes to serve employment centers; concern for security, particularly on South Odessa route.

C. Framework for Action

The Permian Basin Regional Service Planning working group conducted this exercise* at its regular meeting on September 21, 2006 to evaluate the overall progress of building a fully coordinated transportation system in Region 9.

The goal of the exercise was to demonstrate how far the planning group had come, and to identify areas that could use greater attention in future service planning. The results of the self-assessment are summarized below.

Section 1 – Making Things Happen by Working Together

The Permian Basin has **done well** in involving community leaders and organizations; bringing together providers, agencies and consumers; and developing relationships with neighboring communities and state agencies; although there is more need to inform elected officials. There is strong momentum in this region, and a growing interest in the planning process.

Section 2 – Taking Stock of Community Needs and Moving Forward

The Permian Basin has **done well** in identifying assets, services provided, duplication of services, and the specific mobility needs of its various target populations. There may be more need to assess the value of employing intelligent technology to improve services, and to analyze performance data to achieve cost savings.

Section 3 – Putting Customers First

The Permian Basin has **done well** in providing user-friendly and accessible information sources; providing travel training and customer education programs; and marketing programs that build awareness and encourage greater use of the services. Efforts are ongoing to provide a more seamless payment system for transit services.

Section 4 – Adapting Funding for Greater Mobility

The Permian Basin **needs to begin** strategies for tracking and sharing financial data and using technology to automate the payment system. These actions are, to some extent, already occurring outside the regional service planning process, but have not yet been adapted to transportation coordination. It is also possible that the State may have a significant role in developing and implementing these strategies within regions and statewide.

Section 5 – Moving People Efficiently

The Permian Basin believes this section is largely **not applicable** locally. While efforts to coordinate support services between transportation providers are ongoing, the potential for centralized dispatch systems or “broker” services may

not be feasible or even desirable in this region.

Framework for Action (Page 2)

Overall Community Self-Assessment

The Permian Basin, overall, has **done well** in building a fully coordinated transportation network, with little prompting or formal direction. Out of necessity, and on behalf of the clients served, transportation providers and health & humans service agencies have long coordinated, communicated and collaborated in this region.

While there is always opportunity for improvement, and the region is determined to continue evaluating, not only the process, but the end results, including specific projects that may grow and develop from regional service planning, this working group should be viewed as a model of transportation coordination in the State.

**Taken from "A Framework For Action, Building The Fully Coordinated Transportation System, A Self Assessment Tool for Communities" (www.unitedweride.org)*

D. Medical Transportation Program Agreements

Form 1 – Request to Subcontract for MTP Services

Form 1



TO: Cheryl Pineda, Transportation Services Section Director

FROM: Janet Ehrhart, Executive Director

SUBJECT: Request to Subcontract for MTP Services

DATE: May 3, 2006

Proposed subcontractor identification information

Name of Entity: ECHENOK
Responsible party: Ken Sordick
Mailing Address: 8007 E. Highway 68
City, State, Zip: Odessa, Texas 79766
Phone number: 409-941-8228

Area in which subcontractor will provide services:

(List counties in which the subcontractor will operate. If the operating area is not (that a county, list cities.) Request for Medical Transportation for Midland and Ector Counties.

One-way rate stipulated by primary contractor with subcontractor:
\$2.00 in-town and \$3.00 out-of-town

Number of one-way trips stipulated by primary contractor with subcontractor:
1,000

Total subcontract allocation: \$2,000

Reason for entering into subcontract arrangement: Midland occasionally needs backup for wheelchair clients in Midland and Ector County. ECHENOK is an experienced provider in Midland and Odessa and has agreed to provide the service.

Beginning and Ending Date of Subcontract: June 1, 2006 – May 31, 2007

The primary contractor understands that contract provisions listed in the contract with the primary contractor apply to the subcontractor and that the primary contractor is responsible for enforcement of those provisions.


Signature of Primary Contractor


Signature of Subcontractor

5-3-06
Date

5-3-06
Date

Form 2 – MTP Subcontracting Agreement

THE STATE OF TEXAS §

THE COUNTY OF DAWSON §

**MEDICAL TRANSPORTATION SERVICES
SUBCONTRACTING AGREEMENT**

THIS SUBCONTRACTING AGREEMENT is made by and between West Texas Opportunities, Inc., hereinafter called the “Primary Transportation Service Area Provider” (TSAP), and E-ZRider, hereinafter called the “Subcontractor”.

EXISTING SERVICE PROVIDERS: The Primary TSAP will coordinate with the existing state and local transportation service providers to continue as participants under the subcontracting requirements.

Subcontractors providing service under the MTP purchase order, included as Attachment A, shall meet the same requirements and provide the same service and level of experience as required of the Primary TSAP and outlined in the MTP RFP #B442006072073000 and subsequent amendments and clarifications.

No subcontract under the purchase order shall relieve the Primary TSAP of responsibility for the services.

The Primary TSAP shall assume responsibility for coordination, control, and performance of all Subcontractors.

The Primary TSAP shall be held solely responsible and accountable for the completion of all work for which the Primary TSAP has subcontracted.

TxDOT reserves the right to request the removal of Primary TSAP’s Subcontractor if deemed unsatisfactory by TxDOT.

Subcontracting shall be at the Primary TSAP’s expense. TxDOT retains the right to check Subcontractor’s background and make a determination to approve or reject the use of submitted Subcontractor(s). Any negative responses may result in disqualification of the Subcontractor.

The Primary TSAP shall maintain all project management, schedule and responsibilities for Subcontractors.

The TSAP shall pay all Subcontractor(s) in accordance with Texas Government Code §2251.022.

The TSAP shall be the only contact for TxDOT and Subcontractor(s).

Form 2 – MTP Subcontracting Agreement (Page 2)

TxDOT will review and approve subcontracts.

TRANSPORTATION SERVICE AREA: The Subcontractor, E-ZRider agrees to provide backup MTP trips upon request by Midessa Transportation for Midland and Ector Counties.

UNIT COST PER TRIP: The Primary TSAP agrees to reimburse the Subcontractor the negotiated rate of \$23.00 in-town and \$43.00 out-of-town for all successfully completed one-way trips, contingent upon reimbursement from TxDOT.

CLAIMS PROCESSING: The Subcontractor will submit claims to the WTO,I Claims Processing Coordinator each Monday before close of business for the prior week's transportation. WTO,I will submit claims weekly no later than each Friday for transportation services for the week before.

REIMBURSEMENT: WTO,I will reimburse Subcontractor for claims within 10 working days from the receipt of funds from TxDOT.

TERM OF SERVICE: The term of service will be for a 36 month period, beginning upon issuance of the purchase order from TxDOT to West Texas Opportunities, Inc. with an option to renew for an additional two 36 month periods per mutual agreement between West Texas Opportunities, Inc. , TxDOT and the Subcontractor.

CANCELLATION: This subcontract may be cancelled, without penalty, by either party by providing 30 days written notice to the other party. WTO,I will pay the Subcontractor the negotiated rate for acceptable service performed up to the date specified in the notice of cancellation. Termination under this paragraph shall not relieve the Subcontractor of any obligation or liability that has occurred prior to cancellation.

SIGNATORY WARRANTY: The undersigned signatory for the Primary TSAP and the Subcontractor represents and warrants that he or she is an officer of the organization for which he or she has executed this agreement and he or she has full and complete authority to enter into this agreement on behalf of the organization.

<p>WEST TEXAS OPPORTUNITIES, INC.</p> <p>BY: <u><i>Janet Everheart</i></u> Signature of Authorized Officer Janet Everheart Typed, Printed or Stamped Name</p> <p>TITLE: <u>Executive Director</u></p> <p>DATE: <u>6-1-06</u></p>	<p>E-ZRider</p> <p>BY: <u><i>Kenneth E. Smithson</i></u> Signature of Authorized Officer KENNETH E. SMITHSON Typed, Printed or Stamped Name</p> <p>TITLE: <u>GENERAL MANAGER</u></p> <p>DATE: <u>6-9-06</u></p>
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Form 3 – Memorandum of Understanding

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Between *EZ RIDER* and Midessa Transportation
for the Medical Transportation Program

EZ RIDER and Midessa Transportation will comply with all of the requirements of the Medical Transportation Program (MTP) Services Subcontracting Agreement with West Texas Opportunities, Inc. (WTO,I)

EZ RIDER agrees to provide transportation for MTP authorized clients in the Midland-Odessa urbanized area upon request from Midessa Transportation during the terms of the MTP contract.

EZ RIDER will provide such MTP service Monday through Saturday, from 6:15 a.m. to 6:15 p.m.

EZ RIDER will provide such MTP service 307 days each year, excepting Sundays and the following holidays: New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day.

For next day service, Midessa Transportation personnel will contact the *EZ RIDER* dispatch office at 561-9990 by 7:00 p.m. On Sundays and holidays, Midessa Transportation may leave a voice message at the above number for next day service.


For same day service, Midessa Transportation personnel will contact the *EZ RIDER* dispatch office at 561-9990 at least **ONE HOUR** in advance of the scheduled pick-up time to request assistance with the trip.

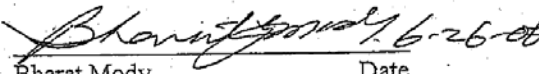
Midessa Transportation will immediately deliver or fax to *EZ RIDER* at 561-8056 a copy of the MTP manifest that includes all of the information necessary to provide the trip and bill WTO,I for the trip.

Midessa Transportation will immediately notify the WTO,I Transportation Director or Billing Specialist by telephone or fax that the trip has been referred to *EZ RIDER*.

EZ RIDER will submit the completed MTP billing sheets directly to WTO,I daily.

EZ RIDER will submit the trip signature sheets and driver logs directly to WTO,I weekly.

 6-28-06
Kenneth E. Smitson Date
General Manager
EZ RIDER

 6-26-06
Bharat Mody Date
General Manager
Midessa Transportation

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