1.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the overall purpose and context for this Intermodal Element Report; summarizes the scope of the effort identified at the outset including what is contained in each chapter; and identifies the major sources of direction for this investigation.

1.1 Study Purpose & Context

This report represents the Intermodal Element of the 2005-2030 ODOT Statewide Intermodal Transportation Plan. It focuses on all modes: highways, public transportation, aviation, railways and the inland waterway system. The report has been prepared with full recognition of the role the transportation system plays in the state and local economy. To that end both freight and passenger characteristics of the modes have been fully investigated (both today and in the future) and merged with a thorough discussion of Oklahoma economic sectors. As a result not only have passenger intermodal opportunities been identified, but also a series of intermodal logistics opportunities are described. All of this information leads to a set of comprehensive intermodal transportation initiatives identified for possible implementation. These initiatives resulted from both technical investigation and valuable input from ODOT and other key stakeholders statewide.

1.2 Review of Scope of Services

This report has been assembled through a series of related Task Reports developed consistently with the study purpose above. In all five task reports were assembled and are summarized below.

1.2.1 Inventory of Existing Statewide Freight and Intermodal Facilities and Networks – Task 1

The purpose of this task was to inventory relevant modes of transportation, including major freight and passenger corridors and facilities. Focusing on intermodal linkages and taking note of potential future linkages, the inventory includes the air passenger/air cargo systems, the river-port system (the McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation waterway and its network of public and private port facilities), major interstate and state highway corridors, the freight rail system, and selected public transportation systems including intercity rail and bus systems and services. This inventory is contained in Chapter 2 – Current Conditions of the Intermodal System.

1.2.2 Needs/Issues Survey – Task 2

This task was critical to the remainder of the study, in that it is only through the "on-the-ground" knowledge of local leaders and public and private transportation providers that implementable solutions to improving the intermodal system will emerge. The search for potential logistics centers and other economic development opportunities, and the intermodal connections necessary to make these work, was also greatly supported by this task.

We reviewed the December, 2001 surveys conducted by ETC Institute, inc. on behalf of the ODOT Transit Programs Division– both the Stakeholder and Resident surveys. These were useful points of departure for our survey efforts, and were incorporated into the overall results of this task, as pertinent background information. These surveys were specifically designed to assess public perception of rural transit services in Oklahoma and the desire to expand public transportation services statewide. However, those surveys were somewhat limited in their usefulness for this study, because of their focus on public transportation service, while providing general ratings of satisfaction and rankings of importance among broad initiative categories. We went beyond them to a more pointed and focused survey effort – with considerable emphasis on all modes, economic development opportunities, logistics niche opportunities, and the intermodal system needed to support such initiatives. This was done through a mailed survey to a statistically valid sample of stakeholders.

Moreover, we followed up the formal surveys with stakeholder interviews. This format allowed us to explore economic development and logistics opportunities with individuals having extensive inside working knowledge of specific areas, modes of transportation, and economic opportunities and trends within the state.

Because of the scope of the survey effort, the results are documented in various report chapters. Views by stakeholders of the current Intermodal system are provided in Chapter 2 along with the system inventory. Stakeholder views of the future system are provided in Chapter 3 – Future of the Intermodal System. Stakeholder views of the transportation/economic relationship are provided in Chapter 4 – Oklahoma's Intermodal System and the State Economy. The survey methodology is given in Appendix B and the list of mailed survey recipients and interviewees are given in Appendix C and D respectively.

1.2.3 Assessment of Current and Future Intermodal Logistics Opportunities of Significant Economic value to Oklahoma – Task 3

The purpose of this task was to identify intermodal freight opportunities and economic growth hubs in the context of evolving logistics and supply chain patterns. The basis for this identification included:

- the characteristics of freight flows in and through Oklahoma;
- information about Oklahoma's evolving economy; and
- information obtained from the Task 2 surveys.

Such opportunities investigated included expansion of existing intermodal facilities, and creation of new public or private facilities such as inland container terminals, warehousing and distribution centers, free trade zones or industrial parks, or some combination of all of these.

In addition to supply chain opportunities associated with private goods movement, we also considered military supply chain dynamics, which are increasingly important both nationally and within Oklahoma. On the whole, military supply chains rely increasingly on the same transportation networks as do private supply chains. The results of this task are provided as Chapter 5 – Intermodal Logistics Opportunities in Oklahoma.

1.2.4 Identification of Major Existing and Likely Future Restrictions – Task 4

The purpose of this task was to identify restrictions in the intermodal transportation system in Oklahoma which currently, or may in the future, constrain the development of logistics opportunities, and in general, which constrain economic growth in Oklahoma. These included both freight transport restrictions, as well as constraints in the passenger transportation system. The latter focuses in particular on difficulties in bringing employees to major employment centers.

Restrictions may include physical infrastructure, as well as operational impediments and regulatory constraints. The discussion of existing restrictions is provided in Chapter 2 and the discussion of future restrictions is provided in Chapter 3.

1.2.5 Development of Strategies, Policies, and Project Concepts – Task 5

The purpose of this task was to develop strategies, policies, and project concepts which will enhance the intermodal transportation system in Oklahoma, and which in particular will assist in the development of economically valuable facilities that take advantage of Oklahoma's comparative logistics advantages, including both civilian and military logistics opportunities. The Task report includes identification of strategies, policies, and projects, together with an implementation plan. The results of this Task are provided last as Chapter 6 – Proposed Intermodal Transportation Initiatives. The policy framework in matrix form is provided in Appendix E.

A related objective was to develop plans in discrete, implementable steps that will maximize the potential for short and long term economic growth, result in measurable results, and demonstrate to the private sector that the state is serious about promoting economic development through strong transportation planning.

1.3 Sources of Information – Policy Direction

The data, analysis and conclusions provided represent a major collaboration between the consultant team, ODOT and major transportation and economic development stakeholders. Data sources for each of the modes and Intermodal opportunities are considerable and are summarized in a bibliography as Appendix A. This data includes many federal state and local publications accessed through web sites for each of the major modes and to document economic conditions. In addition a considerable data library was assembled including relevant publications from State and local agencies and the Oklahoma Department of Commerce (ODOC)..

Perhaps even more important to the direction and outcome of this investigation, however, was the input received from ODOT staff through one-on-one conversations as well as through a charette conducted early on that involved key members of the consultant team, ODOT top management and ODC leadership. The exchange of information at the charette allowed important dialogue between all parties on important Intermodal issues and was generally invaluable in shaping the direction of the effort. Likewise, the survey and face-to-face interviews

conducted across a broad spectrum of both private sector and public sector organizations helped identify problems with the system, logistics opportunities and major Intermodal focus areas.