

## **CLAIMS**

1. A transport vehicle system comprising:

a track provided in a manner extending over a plurality of areas;

a plurality of transport vehicles configured to travel in one  
5 direction along the track;

a plurality of placement units disposed along the track and  
configured for each transport vehicle to deliver or receive an article to  
or from the placement units; and

a plurality of area controllers each configured to receive, from a  
10 host controller, a conveyance instruction to convey an article placed on  
one of the placement units, consider the corresponding one of the areas  
as a jurisdiction area, and cause the transport vehicle in the jurisdiction  
area to execute various instructions, wherein

in one jurisdiction area, the placement unit belonging to a  
15 special section being a section that is unable to be entered without  
passing through another jurisdiction area different from the one  
jurisdiction area is considered as a special placement unit, each area  
controller, when having received from the host controller the  
conveyance instruction destined for the one special placement unit  
20 belonging to an own jurisdiction area that is a jurisdiction area of the  
area controller, transmits a movement instruction to cause an empty  
transport vehicle to move toward the own jurisdiction area to another  
area controller configured to control the transport vehicle in the other  
jurisdiction area, and also causes an empty transport vehicle that has  
25 become available in the own jurisdiction area after transmission of the  
movement instruction to execute the conveyance instruction, and

2. ~~The transport vehicle system according to claim 1, wherein~~  
the empty transport vehicle in the own jurisdiction area to be  
detected by the area controller after the transmission of the movement  
instruction is an empty transport vehicle that enters the own jurisdiction  
5 area from the other jurisdiction area or an empty transport vehicle that  
becomes available by placing an article onto the special placement unit  
belonging to the own jurisdiction area.

23. The transport vehicle system according to claim 1 ~~or 2~~, wherein  
10 the area controller deletes the movement instruction transmitted to the  
other area controller after causing the empty transport vehicle that has  
become available in the own jurisdiction area to execute the conveyance  
instruction.

15 34. The transport vehicle system according to claim 1 or 2 ~~any one~~  
~~of claims 1 to 3~~, wherein the area controller detects whether an empty  
transport vehicle is present in the own jurisdiction area before  
transmitting the movement instruction to the other area controller.

20 45. The transport vehicle system according to claim 34, wherein the  
area controller detects whether an empty transport vehicle is present in  
the own jurisdiction area and upstream of the one special placement unit  
before transmitting the movement instruction to the other area  
controller.