What is claimed is:

1. A transport system comprising, in order to transport an article between a plurality of processing devices, an overhead travelling vehicle track passing above loading ports of the processing devices, and an overhead travelling vehicle travelling in one direction along the overhead travelling vehicle track and includes a hoist, the transport system comprising:

a local track disposed so as to be below and in parallel with the overhead travelling vehicle track and above a loading port of a processing device from upstream of the loading port to downstream of the loading port along the one direction,;

a local vehicle travelling along the local track and including a hoist that lifts and lowers an article;

a first buffer disposed so as to be below the local track and upstream of the loading port of the processing device along the one direction, the overhead travelling vehicle and the local vehicle both configured to deliver and receive an article with the first buffer; and

a second buffer disposed so as to be below the local track and downstream of the loading port of the processing device along the one direction, the overhead travelling vehicle and the local vehicle both configured to deliver and receive an article with the second buffer.

2. The transport system according to claim 1,

wherein the first buffer and the second buffer are each configured such that only one article may be placed thereon.

3. The transport system according to claim 2,

wherein the first buffer and the second buffer are each disposed at a height

according to which the local vehicle supporting an article may travel only above the first buffer without an article and the second buffer without an article, and the local vehicle not supporting an article may travel the first buffer both with an article and without an article and the second buffer both with an article and without an article.

4. The transport system according to claim 1,

wherein the first buffer and the second buffer each have a two-level stepped structure including an upper level and a lower level, and one article can be placed on each of the upper level and the lower level of the first buffer and the second buffer,

the lower level is disposed on a side close to the loading port, the upper level is disposed on a side distant from the loading port, and regardless of whether an article has been placed on the lower level, the local vehicle may pass above the lower level when the local vehicle is supporting an article and when the local vehicle is not supporting an article, and

the upper level is disposed at a height according to which the local vehicle supporting an article may travel only above the upper level without an article, and the local vehicle not supporting an article may travel above the upper level both with an article and without an article.

5. The transport system according to claim 1,

wherein the local track is made up of two parallel rails with a gap in-between through which an article can pass in a vertical direction.

6. The transport system according to claim 1, further comprising:

a member for controlling the overhead travelling vehicle and the local vehicle such that the overhead travelling vehicle delivers an article to the first buffer and the second buffer and removes an article from the loading port, and the local vehicle delivers an article from the first buffer and the second buffer to the loading port.

7. The transport system according to claim 1,

wherein the first buffer and the second buffer are supported by a horizontal frame disposed above the loading port, and the frame is provided with a look-down sensor for detecting an interfering object on the loading port side.

8. A transport system for addition on to an existing overhead travelling vehicle system, the transport system comprising:

a local track that is disposed so as to be below an overhead travelling vehicle track and above a loading port of a processing device from upstream of the loading port to downstream of the loading port along one direction, and is disposed in parallel with the overhead travelling vehicle track;

a local vehicle that travels along the local track and includes a hoist that lifts and lowers an article;

a first buffer that is disposed so as to be below the local track and upstream of the loading port of the processing device along the one direction, an overhead travelling vehicle and the local vehicle both being able to perform delivery and receipt of an article with the first buffer; and

a second buffer that is disposed so as to be below the local track and downstream of the loading port of the processing device along the one direction, the overhead travelling vehicle and the local vehicle both being able to perform delivery and receipt of an article with the second buffer.

9. A transport system comprising, in order to transport an article between a plurality of processing devices, an overhead travelling vehicle track that passes above loading ports of the processing devices, and an overhead travelling vehicle that travels in one direction along the overhead travelling vehicle track and includes a hoist, the

transport system comprising:

a local track that is disposed so as to be below the overhead travelling vehicle track and above a loading port, and is disposed in parallel with the overhead travelling vehicle track;

a local vehicle that travels along the local track and includes a hoist that lifts and lowers an article; and

a two-level stepped buffer including an upper level and a lower level,

one article being able to be placed on each of the upper level and the lower level,

the lower level being disposed on a side close to the loading port, the upper level being disposed on a side distant from the loading port, and regardless of whether an article has been placed on the lower level, the local vehicle being able to pass above the lower level when the local vehicle is supporting an article and when the local vehicle is not supporting an article, and

the upper level is disposed at a height according to which the local vehicle supporting an article may travel only above the upper level without an article, and the local vehicle not supporting an article may travel above the upper level both with an article and without an article.

10. A transport method for transporting an article to a loading port of a processing device using an overhead travelling vehicle track that passes above the loading port and an overhead travelling vehicle that travels in one direction along the overhead travelling vehicle track and includes a hoist,

a local track being provided that is disposed so as to be below the overhead travelling vehicle track and above the loading port of the processing device from upstream of the loading port to downstream of the loading port along the one direction, and is disposed in parallel with the overhead travelling vehicle track,

a local vehicle being provided that travels along the local track and includes a hoist that lifts and lowers an article,

a first buffer being provided that is disposed so as to be below the local track and upstream of the loading port of the processing device along the one direction, the overhead travelling vehicle and the local vehicle both being able to perform delivery and receipt of an article with the first buffer, and

a second buffer being provided that is disposed so as to be below the local track and downstream of the loading port of the processing device along the one direction, the overhead travelling vehicle and the local vehicle both being able to perform delivery and receipt of an article with the second buffer,

the transport method comprising:

a step for dropping off an article at the first buffer or the second buffer by the overhead travelling vehicle;

a step for dropping off an article from the first buffer or the second buffer at the loading port by the local vehicle; and

a step for removing an article from the loading port by the overhead travelling vehicle.

What is claimed is:

1. A transport system (2) comprising, in order to transport an article (18) between a plurality of processing devices (4), an overhead travelling vehicle track (10) passing above loading ports (6) of the processing devices (4), and an overhead travelling vehicle (12) travelling in one direction along the overhead travelling vehicle track (10) and including a hoist (14), the transport system (2) being **characterized by**:

   a local track (20) disposed so as to be below and in parallel with the overhead travelling vehicle track (10) and above a loading port (6) of a processing device (4) from upstream of the loading port (6) to downstream of the loading port (6) along the one direction;
   a local vehicle (22) travelling along the local track (20) and including a hoist (44) that lifts and lowers an article (18);
   a first buffer (25a, 26a) disposed so as to be below the local track (20) and upstream of the loading port (6) of the processing device (4) along the one direction, the overhead travelling vehicle (12) and the local vehicle (22) both configured to deliver and receive an article (18) with the first buffer (25a, 26a); and
   a second buffer (25b, 26b) disposed so as to be below the local track (20) and downstream of the loading port (6) of the processing device (4) along the one direction, the overhead travelling vehicle (12) and the local vehicle (22) both configured to deliver and receive an article (18) with the second buffer (25b, 26b).

2. The transport system (2) according to claim 1, wherein the first buffer (25a, 26a) and the second buffer (25b, 26b) are each configured such that only one article (18) may be placed thereon.

3. The transport system (2) according to claim 2, wherein the first buffer (25a, 26a) and the second buffer (25b, 26b) are each disposed at a height according to which the local vehicle (22) supporting an article (18) may travel only above the first buffer (25a, 26a) without an article (18) and the second buffer (25b, 26b) without an article (18), and the local vehicle (22) not supporting an article (18) may travel the first buffer (25a, 26a) both with an article (18) and without an article (18) and the second buffer (25b, 26b) both with an article (18) and without an article (18).

4. The transport system (2) according to claim 1, wherein the first buffer (25a, 26a) and the second buffer (25b, 26b) each have a two-level stepped structure including an upper level and a lower level, and one article (18) can be placed on each of the upper level and the lower level of the first buffer (25a, 26a) and the second buffer (25b, 26b),
the lower level is disposed on a side close to the loading port (6), the upper level is disposed on a side distant from the loading port (6), and regardless of whether an article (18) has been placed on the lower level, the local vehicle (22) may pass above the lower level when the local vehicle (22) is supporting an article (18) and when the local vehicle (22) is not supporting an article (18), and
the upper level is disposed at a height according to which the local vehicle (22) supporting an article (18) may travel only above the upper level without an article (18), and the local vehicle (22) not supporting an article (18) may travel above the upper level both with an article (18) and without an article (18).

5. The transport system (2) according to claim 1, wherein the local track (20) is made up of two parallel rails with a gap in-between through which an article (18) can pass in a vertical direction.

6. The transport system (2) according to claim 1, further comprising:

a member (73) for controlling the overhead travelling vehicle (12) and the local vehicle (22) such that the overhead travelling vehicle (12) delivers an article (18) to the first buffer (25a, 26a) and the second buffer (25b, 26b) and removes an article (18) from the loading port (6), and the local vehicle (22) delivers an article (18) from the first buffer (25a, 26a) and the second buffer (25b, 26b) to the loading port (6).

7. The transport system (2) according to claim 1, wherein the first buffer (25a, 26a) and the second buffer (25b, 26b) are supported by a horizontal frame (72) disposed above the loading port (6), and the frame (72) is provided with a look-down sensor (76) for detecting an interfering object on the loading port side.

8. A transport system for addition on to an existing overhead travelling vehicle system to obtain a transport system (2) according to claim 1, wherein the transport system for addition on to an existing overhead travelling vehicle system comprises:

the local track (20) that is disposed so as to be below the overhead travelling vehicle track (10) and above the loading port (6) of the processing device (4) from upstream of the loading port (6) to downstream of the loading port (6) along one direction, and is disposed in parallel with the overhead travelling vehicle track (10);
the local vehicle (22) that travels along the local track (20) and includes a hoist (44) that lifts and

lowers an article (18);
the first buffer (25a, 26a) that is disposed so as to be below the local track (20) and upstream of the loading port (6) of the processing device (4) along the one direction, the overhead travelling vehicle (12) and the local vehicle (22) both being able to perform delivery and receipt of an article (18) with the first buffer (25a, 26a); and
the second buffer (25b, 26b) that is disposed so as to be below the local track (20) and downstream of the loading port (6) of the processing device (4) along the one direction, the overhead travelling vehicle (12) and the local vehicle (22) both being able to perform delivery and receipt of an article (18) with the second buffer (25b, 26b).

9. A transport method for transporting an article (18) to a loading port (6) of a processing device (4) using an overhead travelling vehicle track (10) that passes above the loading port (6) and an overhead travelling vehicle (12) that travels in one direction along the overhead travelling vehicle track (10) and includes a hoist,
a local track (20) being provided that is disposed so as to be below the overhead travelling vehicle track (10) and above the loading port (6) of the processing device (4) from upstream of the loading port (6) to downstream of the loading port (6) along the one direction, and is disposed in parallel with the overhead travelling vehicle track (10),
a local vehicle (22) being provided that travels along the local track (20) and includes a hoist that lifts and lowers an article (18),

a first buffer (25a, 26a) being provided that is disposed so as to be below the local track (20) and upstream of the loading port (6) of the processing device (4) along the one direction, the overhead travelling vehicle (12) and the local vehicle (22) both being able to perform delivery and receipt of an article (18) with the first buffer (25a, 26a), and
a second buffer (25b, 26b) being provided that is disposed so as to be below the local track (20) and downstream of the loading port (6) of the processing device (4) along the one direction, the overhead travelling vehicle (12) and the local vehicle (22) both being able to perform delivery and receipt of an article (18) with the second buffer (25b, 26b),
the transport method comprising:

a step for dropping off an article (18) at the first buffer (25a, 26a) or the second buffer (25b, 26b) by the overhead travelling vehicle (12);
a step for dropping off an article (18) from the first buffer (25a, 26a) or the second buffer (25b, 26b) at the loading port (6) by the local vehicle (22); and
a step for removing an article (18) from the loading port (6) by the overhead travelling vehicle (12).