CLAIMS

1. A gap blocking system, comprising:

a loading platform having a gap separating a first portion of the loading platform from a second portion of the loading platform;

and

a guardrail assembly comprising a plurality of guardrail units coupled to the first portion of the loading platform and configured to transition between a first position and a second position,

wherein the plurality of guardrail units are configured to block access to the gap when in the first position,

wherein an individual guardrail unit of the plurality of guardrail units is configured to interface with an engagement feature of a ride vehicle that is coupled to a transport that extends through the gap, the transport being configured to propel the ride vehicle along a loading path adjacent to the loading platform, to selectively transition the individual guardrail unit from the first position to the second position, wherein the individual guardrail unit is configured to permit the ride vehicle to occupy a guest-accessible position adjacent to or on the loading platform in the second position.

2. The gap blocking system of claim 1, wherein the plurality of guardrail units are configured to extend generally vertically along an edge of the first portion of the loading platform in the first position, such that the plurality of guardrail units in the first position protrude above a surface of the first portion of the loading platform to block access to the gap.

3. The gap blocking system of claim 2, wherein the plurality of guardrail units are configured to subduct beneath the surface of the first portion of the loading platform to transition to the second position.

4. The gap blocking system of claim 1, comprising a plurality of track assemblies coupled to an underside of the first portion of the loading platform, wherein the individual

guardrail unit of the plurality of guardrail units comprises a roller assembly configured to interface with a respective track assembly of the plurality of track assemblies to permit the individual guardrail unit to translate along the respective track assembly between the first position and the second position.

5. The gap blocking system of claim 4, wherein the plurality of track assemblies comprise respective springs configured to translate the plurality of guardrail units from the second position to the first position and respective dampers configured to limit a translation rate of the plurality of guardrail units from the second position to the first position.

6. The gap blocking system of claim 1, wherein the individual guardrail unit of the plurality of guardrail units comprises a plurality of rail segments pivotably coupled at hinge points, wherein the plurality of rail segments are configured to articulate relative to one another at the hinge points to facilitate transitioning of the individual guardrail unit from the first position to the second position, or vice versa.

7. The gap blocking system of claim 1, wherein the first portion of the loading platform is a turntable configured to rotate about an axis and the second portion is an outer platform disposed about the turntable.

8. The gap blocking system of claim 1, wherein the engagement feature is configured to sequentially engage with respective push plates of at least two guardrail units of the plurality of guardrail units to gradually transition the at least two guardrail units from the first position to the second position in a staggered manner.