
CHAPTER 11

COMMUTER AND INTERCITY RAIL SYSTEMS¹

FOREWORD

Chapter 11 Commuter and Intercity Rail System is intended to serve as a guide and to offer insight for planning design and maintenance of commuter and intercity rail transit systems. This chapter will provide insight to corridor planning and the importance of track and roadway considerations for the design, construction and maintenance of a commuter and intercity rail system. It will also provide the considerations for Facilities and Structures and track requirements in a yard, along with signal and maintenance of way considerations to provide information and data so that engineering professionals can make well informed choices. The available methods, components and application are many and varied, therefore concise and clearly defined criteria are essential when developing goals and objectives.

This chapter endorses the AREMA recommended practices from other chapters as when possible and recognizes that many of the topics within the required extensive coordination within other chapters in the manual as they relate. Various techniques, components and methodologies for construction and maintenance must be evaluated fairly and accurately to consider alternative concepts on an equal basis.

- [Chapter 6 Rail Facilities, Utilities and Buildings](#)
- [Chapter 12 Rail Transit](#) (For non-FRA compliant systems)
- [Chapter 14 Yards and Terminals - Part 6 Passenger Facilities](#)
- [Chapter 17 High Speed Rail Systems](#)
- [Chapter 28 Clearances](#)
- [Chapter 33 Electrical Energy Utilization](#) (Electric Traction)

¹ The material in this and other chapters in the AREMA *Manual for Railway Engineering* is published as recommended practice to railroads and others concerned with the engineering, design and construction of railroad fixed properties (except signals and communications), and allied services and facilities. For the purpose of this Manual, RECOMMENDED PRACTICE is defined as a material, device, design, plan, specification, principle or practice recommended to the railways for use as required, either exactly as presented or with such modifications as may be necessary or desirable to meet the needs of individual railways, but in either event, with a view to promoting efficiency and economy in the location, construction, operation or maintenance of railways. It is not intended to imply that other practices may not be equally acceptable.

The reader is encouraged to evaluate the considerations and effective practices utilized by the many operating commuter and intercity rail systems in North America and to utilize this manual and chapter as a basis for the work.

NOTE: This chapter is being developed by Committee 11, which was formed in 1998. Additional material will appear in future Manual Revisions.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| Part/Section | Description | Page |
|--------------|---|---------------|
| 1 | Introduction | 11-1-1 |
| 1.1 | Introduction | 11-1-1 |
| 1.2 | Safety/Security | 11-1-2 |
| 2 | Corridor Planning Considerations | 11-2-1 |
| 2.1 | General Information (2017) | 11-2-2 |
| 2.2 | Planning | 11-2-8 |
| 2.3 | Data Collection | 11-2-8 |
| 2.4 | Corridor Identification | 11-2-9 |
| 2.5 | Corridor Evaluation | 11-2-10 |
| 2.6 | Identification of Technology | 11-2-11 |
| 2.7 | Multi-Modal Interfaces | 11-2-20 |
| 2.8 | Corridor Implementation Considerations | 11-2-21 |
| 3 | Track and Roadway Considerations | 11-3-1 |
| 3.1 | General Information (2022) | 11-3-2 |
| 3.2 | System Design Criteria | 11-3-2 |
| 3.3 | Clearances | 11-3-15 |
| 3.4 | Right of Way Design Criteria and Considerations | 11-3-15 |
| 3.5 | Track and Roadway Considerations | 11-3-21 |
| 4 | Facilities and Structural Considerations | 11-4-1 |
| 4.1 | General Information | 11-4-2 |
| 4.2 | Passenger Facilities | 11-4-4 |
| 4.3 | Multi-Modal Facilities | 11-4-20 |
| 4.4 | Yards and Shops | 11-4-22 |
| 4.5 | Bridges and Drainage Structures | 11-4-33 |
| 4.6 | Crash Walls | 11-4-35 |
| 4.7 | Tunnels | 11-4-36 |
| 5 | Vehicle Considerations | 11-5-1 |
| 5.1 | General Information | 11-5-1 |
| 5.2 | General Considerations | 11-5-1 |
| 5.3 | Design Considerations | 11-5-1 |
| 5.4 | Rolling Stock | 11-5-2 |
| 6 | Signals, Communications, and Propulsion Considerations | 11-6-1 |
| 6.1 | General Information | 11-6-2 |
| 6.2 | Operations Centers | 11-6-2 |

TABLE OF CONTENTS (CONT)

| Part/Section | Description | Page |
|--------------|--|---------------|
| 6.3 | Signal Systems | 11-6-3 |
| 6.4 | Communications Systems | 11-6-3 |
| 6.5 | Propulsion Systems | 11-6-7 |
| 7 | Maintenance of Way Considerations | 11-7-1 |
| 7.1 | General Informaton | 11-7-1 |
| 7.2 | Maintenance Philosophy | 11-7-2 |
| 7.3 | Inspection, Evaluation and Planning | 11-7-2 |
| 7.4 | Right of Way Maintenance | 11-7-2 |
| 7.5 | Track Maintenance Limits | 11-7-2 |
| 7.6 | Track Maintenance Operations. | 11-7-2 |
| 7.7 | Structures Maintenance Operations. | 11-7-2 |
| 7.8 | Signal and Communications Maintenance Operations | 11-7-3 |
| 7.9 | Propulsion System Maintenance Operations | 11-7-3 |
| 7.10 | Facility Maintenance Operations | 11-7-3 |