

政府總部
運輸及房屋局
運輸科
香港花園道美利大廈



Transport and
Housing Bureau
Government Secretariat
Transport Branch
Murray Building, Garden Road,
Hong Kong.

本局檔號 OUR REF.: THB(T)L 3/2/4
來函檔號 YOUR REF.: CB1/PL/TP

電話 Tel. No.: 2189 2110
傳真 Fax No.: 2104 7274

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Legislative Council Secretariat
Legislative Council Building
8 Jackson Road
Central, Hong Kong
(Attn.: Mr Andy Lau)

[Fax No. : 2121 0420]

Dear Mr Lau,

Panel on Transport

I refer to your letter of 9 May 2008. Our response to the request in paragraph 2 of your letter for an update on the “Review of public light bus operations” under discussion item 12 is provided below.

Public light buses (“PLBs”) are operated under passenger service licences issued by the Transport Department (“TD”). There are two types of PLB operation at present, viz. green minibuses (“GMBs”) and red minibuses (“RMBs”). GMBs operate scheduled services on fixed routes whereas RMBs operate on non-scheduled services. The routeings, frequency and fares of GMBs are subject to the TD’s approval. The Government has been encouraging the conversion of RMB to GMB operation. The TD will develop new routes suitable for GMB operation having regard to the demand for public transport. Interested operators, including RMB operators, will be invited to submit their applications for operation of the new routes. According to the existing GMB operators selection criteria laid down by the TD, applicants for operating new GMB routes who are new entrants to the GMB trade (including incumbent RMB operators) will be given additional marks in the selection exercise to promote the conversion of RMB to GMB operation. This arrangement provides stronger incentives to RMB operators to bid for new GMB routes so as to pursue further the policy of converting RMB routes to GMB routes.

Since the introduction of GMBs in 1972, the total number of GMBs has been on a rise. On top of catering for new GMB routes, some GMB operators have also procured or rented RMBs to meet the increased service demand resulting in more RMBs being converted to GMBs. As at end May 2008, there were 2,912 GMBs operating in Hong Kong, accounting for almost 70% of the local PLB fleet. The TD will continue to encourage RMB operators to provide PLB service in the mode of GMB.

Yours sincerely,

(Miss Vinci Chan)

for Secretary for Transport and Housing