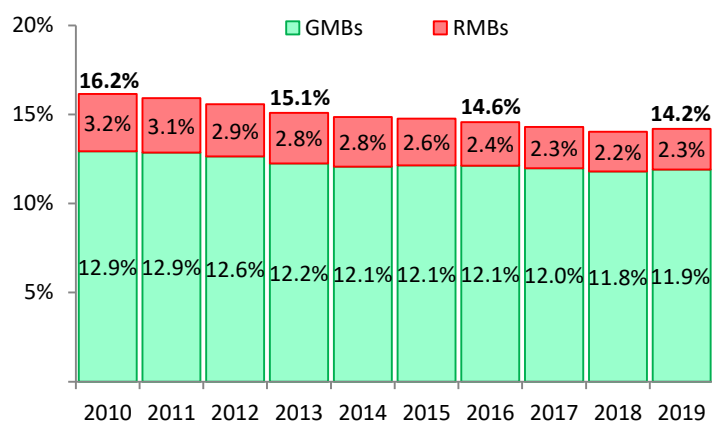




Public light buses in Hong Kong

Figure 1 – Share of daily public transport patronage⁽¹⁾



Note: (1) Individual figures may not add up to the total due to rounding.

Figure 2 – Conversion of red minibus to green minibus

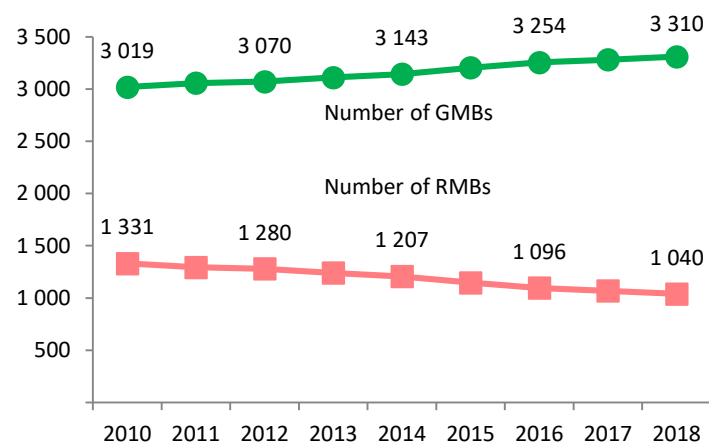
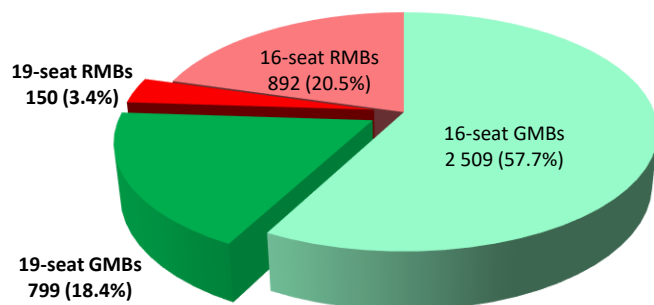


Figure 3 – Number of public light bus registered as at February 2019



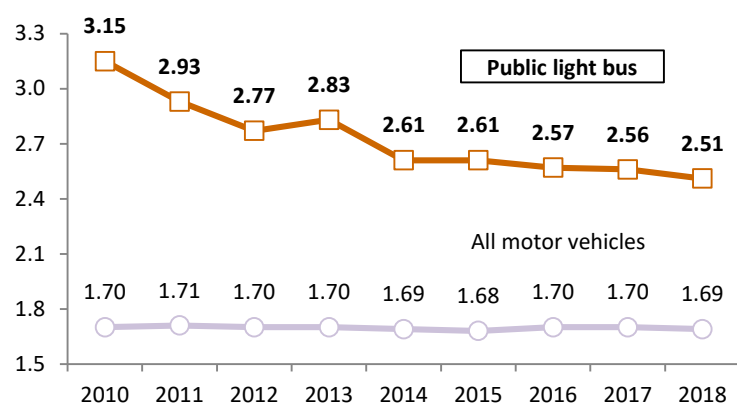
Total number of 16-seat PLBs: 3 401 (78.2%)
Total number of 19-seat PLBs: 949 (21.8%)

Highlights

- In Hong Kong's public transport system, public light buses ("PLBs") are positioned to provide supplementary feeder service and serve areas with relatively lower passenger demand or where the use of high-capacity transport modes is not suitable. They can be classified into green minibuses ("GMBs") and red minibuses ("RMBs"). GMBs operate scheduled services with their routes, fares, vehicle allocation and timetable subject to approval by the Transport Department. RMBs, however, are not subject to regulation in terms of routes and timetable. They are free to adjust fares and operate anywhere (except where special prohibitions apply).
- In the past decade, the average daily public transport patronage in Hong Kong has increased from 11.6 million passengers trips in 2010 to 12.4 million passengers trips in 2019. Nevertheless, amid the on-going expansion of railway network, the share of public transport patronage of PLBs has persistently declined from 16.2% to 14.2% during the period (**Figure 1**), indicating a shrinking role of PLBs, especially RMBs.
- The size of the PLB fleet has been limited at 4 350 since 1976. The Government has over the years encouraged the conversion of RMBs to GMBs for the sake of ensuring service quality level and achieving effective monitoring. With different promotional measures in place (e.g. granting additional marks to RMB operators in the selection exercise of operating new GMB routes), the number of GMBs has progressively increased from 3 019 at end-2010 to 3 310 at end-2018 (**Figure 2**).
- To enhance the overall carrying capacity of PLBs for meeting the passenger demands particularly during peak hours, the maximum seating capacity of PLBs has been increased from 16 seats to 19 seats since July 2017. As at February 2019, there were a total of 949 19-seat PLBs (comprising 799 GMBs and 150 RMBs) (**Figure 3**), accounting for 21.8% of the total number of registered PLBs.

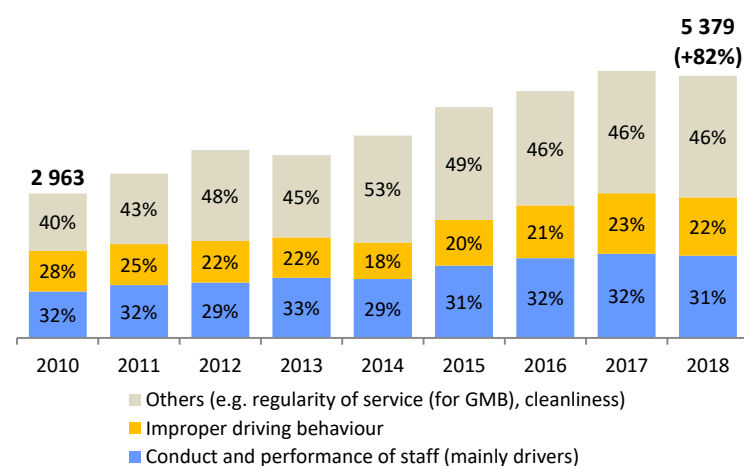
Public light buses in Hong Kong (cont'd)

Figure 4 – Accident involvement rates⁽¹⁾ in road traffic accidents



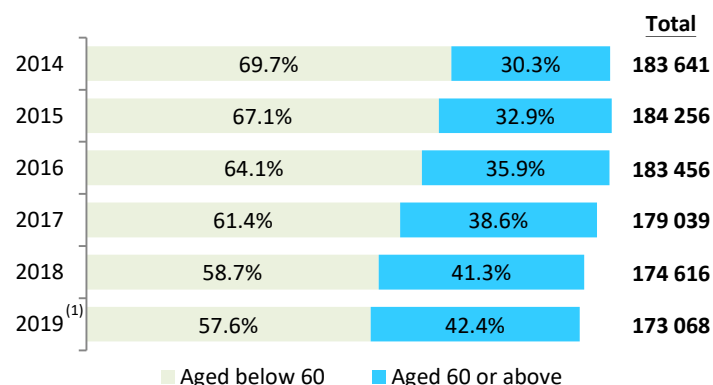
Note: (1) It refers to the number of vehicles involved per million vehicle-kilometres.

Figure 5 – Complaints and suggestions on public light bus services⁽¹⁾



Note: (1) Figures may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Figure 6 – Number of holders of valid driving licence for public light bus at each year end



Note: (1) Data as at the end of June.

Highlights

- With a view to achieving improvements in the safety of PLB operation, the Government has since 2012 imposed various targeted safety measures. These included imposing a maximum speed limit of 80 kilometres per hour and requiring the newly registered PLBs to be fitted with an Electronic Data Recording Device. Probably reflecting the enhanced measures, the accident involvement rate of PLBs in road traffic accidents (i.e. number of PLB vehicles involved in accidents per million vehicle-kilometres) decreased gradually from 3.15 in 2010 to 2.51 in 2018 (**Figure 4**).
- Despite the decreasing accident involvement rate in road traffic accidents, there appears still a gap between passengers' expectation and the PLB service level. In 2018, the number of complaints and suggestions lodged to the Transport Advisory Committee was 5 379, representing an increase of 82% over 2010 (**Figure 5**). Among the complaints and suggestions over the years, over half of them were related to the conduct and performance of staff (mainly drivers) and improper driving behavior.
- As with the taxi trade, the shortage and ageing problems of the PLB drivers have become increasingly serious in recent years. From 2014 to 2019, the number of holders of valid full driving licence for PLBs contracted by 6% to 173 068 (**Figure 6**). Among the PLB driving licence holders, the proportion of those aged 60 or above increased markedly from 30.3% to 42.4% over the same period. To alleviate the problem of manpower shortage, the Government has recently relaxed the eligibility requirements for getting a commercial vehicle driving licence. Despite this, it is still considered challenging to attract new blood to the PLB trade.

Data sources: Latest figures from Transport Department and Transport Advisory Committee.