



September 6, 2000

Mr. J. Middlebrooks
Assistant City Attorney
Criminal Law and Police Section
City Of Dallas
2014 Main, Room #501
Dallas, Texas 75201

OR2000-3452

Dear Mr. J. Middlebrooks:

You ask whether certain information is subject to required public disclosure under chapter 552 of the Government Code. Your request was assigned ID#138795.

The City of Dallas (the "city") received a request for all the arrest reports of four named individuals involved in a specific incident. You claim that the requested information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.103 and 552.108 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim and reviewed the submitted information.¹

Section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code states that information held by a law enforcement agency or prosecutor that deals with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime is excepted from required public disclosure "if release of the information would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime." Gov't Code § 552.108(a)(1). You inform us that the requested information pertains to a pending investigation. We therefore conclude that the release of the information "would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime." *Id.* Thus, the city may withhold the submitted documents from public disclosure pursuant to section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code.

However, section 552.108 is inapplicable to basic information about an arrested person, an arrest, or a crime. Gov't Code § 552.108(c). We believe such basic information refers to the

¹We note that the last page of the submitted documents appears to be non-responsive to this request. Therefore, as the document is not responsive to this request, this ruling does not reach this submitted page of information.

information held to be public in *Houston Chronicle Publishing Company v. City of Houston*, 531 S.W.2d 177 (Tex. Civ. App.—Houston [14th Dist] 1975), *writ ref'd n.r.e. per curiam*, 536 S.W.2d 559 (Tex. 1976). Thus, you must release the type of information that is considered to be front page offense report information, even if that information is not actually on the front page of the offense report. Gov't Code § 552.108(c); see Open Records Decision No. 127 (1976) (summarizing the types of information deemed public by *Houston Chronicle*).

We note that you have the discretion to release all or part of the remaining information that is not otherwise confidential by law. Gov't Code § 552.007. Because we were able to make a determination under section 552.108 we do not address your other arguments against disclosure.²

This letter ruling is limited to the particular records at issue in this request and limited to the facts as presented to us; therefore, this ruling must not be relied upon as a previous determination regarding any other records or any other circumstances.

This ruling triggers important deadlines regarding the rights and responsibilities of the governmental body and of the requestor. For example, governmental bodies are prohibited from asking the attorney general to reconsider this ruling. Gov't Code § 552.301(f). If the governmental body wants to challenge this ruling, the governmental body must appeal by filing suit in Travis County within 30 calendar days. *Id.* § 552.324(b). In order to get the full benefit of such an appeal, the governmental body must file suit within 10 calendar days. *Id.* § 552.353(b)(3), (c). If the governmental body does not appeal this ruling and the governmental body does not comply with it, then both the requestor and the attorney general have the right to file suit against the governmental body to enforce this ruling. *Id.* § 552.321(a).

If this ruling requires the governmental body to release all or part of the requested information, the governmental body is responsible for taking the next step. Based on the statute, the attorney general expects that, within 10 calendar days of this ruling, the governmental body will do one of the following three things: 1) release the public records; 2) notify the requestor of the exact day, time, and place that copies of the records will be provided or that the records can be inspected; or 3) notify the requestor of the governmental body's intent to challenge this letter ruling in court. If the governmental body fails to do one of these three things within 10 calendar days of this ruling, then the requestor should report that failure to the attorney general's Open Government Hotline, toll free, at 877/673-6839. The requestor may also file a complaint with the district or county attorney. *Id.* § 552.3215(e).

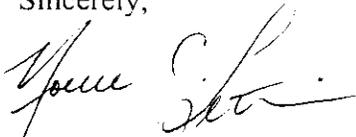
²Generally, basic information may not be withheld from public disclosure under section 552.103. Open Records Decision No. 362 (1983).

If this ruling requires or permits the governmental body to withhold all or some of the requested information, the requestor can appeal that decision by suing the governmental body. *Id.* § 552.321(a); *Texas Department of Public Safety v. Gilbreath*, 842 S.W.2d 408, 411 (Tex. App.--Austin 1992, no writ).

Please remember that under the Act the release of information triggers certain procedures for costs and charges to the requestor. If records are released in compliance with this ruling, be sure that all charges for the information are at or below the legal amounts. Questions or complaints about over-charging must be directed to the General Services Commission at 512/475-2497.

If the governmental body, the requestor, or any other person has questions or comments about this ruling, they may contact our office. Although there is no statutory deadline for contacting us, the attorney general prefers to receive any comments within 10 calendar days of the date of this ruling.

Sincerely,



Noelle C. Letteri
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

NCL/pr

Ref: ID# 138795

Encl. Submitted documents

cc: Mr. Giles Hudson
KTVT Television
10111 North Central Expressway
Dallas, Texas 75231
(w/o enclosures)