ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

July 26, 2004

Mr. Robert R. Ray
Assistant City Attorney
City of Longview
P.O. Box 1952
Longview, Texas 75606-1952

OR2004-6192

Dear Mr. Ray:

You ask whether certain information is subject to required public disclosure under chapter 552 of the Government Code. Your request was assigned ID# 208706.

The City of Longview (the "city") received a request for information pertaining to motor vehicles that were removed from a specified address. You inform us that you have released some information to the requestor but claim that other information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.130 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Section 552.130 of the Government Code excepts from disclosure information that "relates to . . . a motor vehicle operator's or driver's license or permit issued by an agency of this state [or] a motor vehicle title or registration issued by an agency of this state." Gov't Code § 552.130. We note, however, that section 552.130 excepts information from disclosure in order to protect individuals' privacy.

You inform us that the city has released all information relating to vehicles in which the requestor owns an interest. *See* Gov't Code § 552.023(b) (governmental body may not deny access to information to person to whom information relates on grounds that information is considered confidential by privacy principles). You indicate that the requestor does not own an interest in the vehicles at issue here. Based on this representation, we find that the city must withhold the Texas motor vehicle record information you have marked in the submitted documents in accordance with section 552.130 of the Government Code. The remaining submitted information must be released.

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).

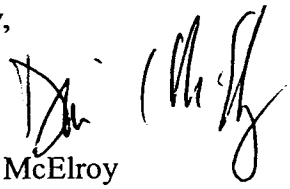
If this ruling requires or permits the governmental body to withhold all or some of the requested information, the requestor can appeal that decision by suing the governmental body. *Id.* § 552.321(a); *Texas Dep't of Pub. Safety v. Gilbreath*, 842 S.W.2d 408, 411 (Tex. App.—Austin 1992, no writ).

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 Hadassah Schloss at the Texas Building and Procurement 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. We note that a third party may challenge this ruling by filing suit seeking to withhold information from a requestor. Gov't Code

§ 552.325. 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,



Denis C. McElroy
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

DCM/sdk

Ref: ID# 208706

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Mr. Wesley Byrd
c/o Mr. Robert R. Ray
City of Longview
P.O. Box 1952
Longview, Texas 75606-1952
(w/o enclosures)