



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

September 17, 2008

Ms. LeAnn M. Quinn
City Secretary
City of Cedar Park
600 North Bell Boulevard
Cedar Park, Texas 78613

OR2008-12812

Dear Ms. Quinn:

You ask whether certain information is subject to required public disclosure under the Public Information Act (the "Act"), chapter 552 of the Government Code. Your request was assigned ID# 321874.

The Cedar Park Police Department (the "department") received a request for all records relating to a specified address for a specified time period. You state that you will release some of the responsive information. You claim that the remaining information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.108 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Section 552.108 of the Government Code provides in pertinent part as follows:

(a) 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:

(1) release of the information would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime;

(2) it is information that the deals with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime only in relation to an investigation that did not result in conviction or deferred adjudication;

...

(b) An internal record or notation of a law enforcement agency or prosecutor that is maintained for internal use in matters relating to law enforcement or prosecution is excepted from [required public disclosure] if:

(1) release of the internal record or notation would interfere with law enforcement or prosecution;

(2) the internal record or notation relates to law enforcement only in relation to an investigation that did not result in conviction or deferred adjudication[.]

Gov't Code § 552.108(a)-(b). Section 552.108(a)(1) protects information, the release of which would interfere with a particular pending criminal investigation or prosecution, while section 552.108(b)(1) encompasses internal law enforcement and prosecution records, the release of which would interfere with on-going law enforcement and prosecution efforts in general. Sections 552.108(a)(2) and (b)(2) protect information that relates to a concluded criminal investigation or prosecution that did not result in conviction or deferred adjudication. A governmental body that claims an exception to disclosure under section 552.108 must reasonably explain how and why this exception is applicable to the information that the governmental body seeks to withhold. *See id.* §§ 552.108(a)(1), .301(e)(1)(A); *see also Ex parte Pruitt*, 551 S.W.2d 706 (Tex. 1977).

You state that Exhibit B is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.108(a)(1) and (b)(1). However, you have failed to explain how the release of Exhibit B would interfere with a particular pending criminal investigation or prosecution. Additionally, you have not explained how the release of Exhibit B would interfere with law enforcement or crime prevention. Therefore, you have failed to demonstrate how section 552.108 is applicable to Exhibit B. *See Open Records Decision No. 252 at 3 (1980)*. Accordingly, we conclude that the department may not withhold Exhibit B under section 552.108 of the Government Code.

You assert that Exhibit C is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.108(a)(2) and (b)(2). You state that Exhibit C pertains to a concluded criminal investigation that did not result in a conviction or deferred adjudication. Accordingly, we agree that section 552.108(a)(2) is applicable to Exhibit C.

We note, and you acknowledge, that section 552.108 does not except from disclosure "basic information about an arrested person, an arrest, or a crime." Gov't Code § 552.108(c). Section 552.108(c) refers to the basic front-page 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) (court delineates law enforcement interests that are present in active cases). The department must release basic information, including a detailed description of the offense and arrest, even if this information does not literally appear on the front page of an offense or arrest report. *See id.* at 186-88; *Open Records Decision No. 127 at 3-4 (1976)* (summarizing types of information deemed public by *Houston Chronicle*). With the exception of basic information, which you state you will release, the department may withhold Exhibit C under section 552.108(a)(2) of the Government Code.

We note that Exhibit B contains Texas motor vehicle record information.¹ 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(a)(1), (2). We have marked the Texas motor vehicle record information the department must withhold under section 552.130 of the Government Code.²

In summary, with the exception of basic information, which you state you will release, the department may withhold Exhibit C under section 552.108(a)(2) of the Government Code. The department must withhold the Texas motor vehicle record information we have marked in Exhibit B under section 552.130 of the Government Code. As you make no further arguments against disclosure, the remainder of Exhibit B must be released.³

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 file suit in Travis County within 30 calendar days. *Id.* § 552.324(b). In order to get the full benefit of such a challenge, the governmental body must file suit within 10 calendar days. *Id.* § 552.353(b)(3). If the governmental body does not file suit over 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).

¹The Office of the Attorney General will raise a mandatory exception on behalf of a governmental body, but ordinarily will not raise other exceptions. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 481 (1987), 480 (1987), 470 (1987).

²Some of the information being released includes the requestor's Texas motor vehicle record information. Ordinarily, this information would be confidential under section 552.130 of the Government Code. However, since this information belongs to the requestor, it may not be withheld in this instance. *See* Gov't Code § 552.023(a); Open Records Decision No. 481 at 4 (1987) (privacy theories not implicated when individual asks governmental body to provide him with information concerning himself). However, if the department receives another request for this particular information from a different requestor, then the department should again seek a decision from this office.

³We note that Exhibit B contains social security numbers. Section 552.147(b) of the Government Code authorizes a governmental body to redact a living person's social security number from public release without the necessity of requesting a decision from this office under the Act. The requestor has a right, however, to her own social security number. *See generally* Gov't Code § 552.023(b) (governmental body may not deny access to person to whom information relates, or that person's representative, solely on grounds that information is considered confidential by privacy principles).

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, upon receiving this ruling, the governmental body will either release the public records promptly pursuant to section 552.221(a) of the Government Code or file a lawsuit challenging this ruling pursuant to section 552.324 of the Government Code. If the governmental body fails to do one of these things, 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 challenge 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 Office of the Attorney General 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,



Benjamin A. Diener
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

BAD/jb

Ref: ID# 321874

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Ms. Kimberly Middleton
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Desoto, Texas 75111
(w/o enclosures)