



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

July 21, 2010

Mr. Tyler Wallach
Assistant City Attorney
City of Fort Worth
1000 Throckmorton Street, 3rd Floor
Fort Worth, Texas 76102

OR2010-11001

Dear Mr. Wallach:

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# 387685 (Fort Worth PIR Nos. W000798, W000799, W000953).

The City of Fort Worth (the "city") received three requests for: 1) geographic information systems ("GIS") shapefiles for the city's sewer lines, water lines, drainage easements, final plats, roads, and zoning, 2) computer-aided design ("CAD") or GIS shapefiles for the city's water lines and sewer lines, and 3) the city's water and sewer GIS data.¹ You state the city has released some of the requested information. You claim the submitted data is excepted from disclosure under section 552.101 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted representative sample of information.²

¹You have provided documentation showing the city sought and received clarification from one of the requestors regarding his request. *See* Gov't Code § 552.222(b) (stating if information requested is unclear to governmental body or if large amount of information has been requested, governmental body may ask requestor to clarify or narrow request, but may not inquire into purpose for which information will be used).

²We assume the representative sample of records submitted to this office is truly representative of the requested records as a whole. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 499 (1988), 497 (1988). This open records letter does not reach, and therefore does not authorize the withholding of, any other requested records to the extent that those records contain substantially different types of information than that submitted to this office.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code excepts from disclosure “information considered to be confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision.” Gov’t Code § 552.101. This section encompasses information protected by other statutes. As part of the Texas Homeland Security Act (“HSA”), sections 418.176 through 418.182 were added to chapter 418 of the Government Code. These provisions make certain information related to terrorism confidential. You assert the submitted data is confidential under section 418.181 of the Government Code, which provides “[t]hose documents or portions of documents in the possession of a governmental entity are confidential if they identify the technical details of particular vulnerabilities of critical infrastructure to an act of terrorism.” *Id.* § 418.181. The fact that information may relate to a governmental body’s security concerns does not make the information *per se* confidential under the HSA. *See* Open Records Decision No. 649 at 3 (1996) (language of confidentiality provision controls scope of its protection). Furthermore, the mere recitation by a governmental body of a statute’s key terms is not sufficient to demonstrate the applicability of the claimed provision. As with any exception to disclosure, a governmental body asserting one of the confidentiality provisions of the HSA must adequately explain how the responsive records fall within the scope of the claimed provision. *See* Gov’t Code § 552.301(e)(1)(A) (governmental body must explain how claimed exception to disclosure applies).

You explain the submitted data contains technical details of the city’s water supply and sanitary sewer systems. You assert, and we agree, the city’s water and sanitary sewer systems are critical infrastructure. *See generally id.* § 421.001 (defining “critical infrastructure” to include “all public or private assets, systems, and functions vital to the security, governance, public health and safety, economy, or morale of the state or the nation”). You explain the release of the submitted data could provide a potential terrorist with details regarding the locations and dimensions of the pipes that are part of city’s water and sanitary sewer lines which the terrorist could use to determine which pipes to rupture in order to cause the greatest amount of damage. You explain the rupturing of pipes could cause widespread flooding, damage to buildings, disruption of commerce, obstruction of emergency vehicles, and disruption of ingress and egress from Alliance Airport. Based on your arguments and our review of the submitted information, we find that you have demonstrated release of the submitted data would identify the technical details of particular vulnerabilities of the city’s water supply and sanitary sewer systems to an act of terrorism. Thus, the submitted data must be withheld under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 418.181 of the Government Code.

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This letter ruling is limited to the particular information 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 information or any other circumstances.

This ruling triggers important deadlines regarding the rights and responsibilities of the governmental body and of the requestor. For more information concerning those rights and responsibilities, please visit our website at http://www.oag.state.tx.us/open/index_orl.php, or call the Office of the Attorney General's Open Government Hotline, toll free, at (877) 673-6839. Questions concerning the allowable charges for providing public information under the Act must be directed to the Cost Rules Administrator of the Office of the Attorney General, toll free, at (888) 672-6787.

Sincerely,



Jessica Eales
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

JCE/em

Ref: ID#387685

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestors
(w/o enclosures)

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