



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS  
GREG ABBOTT

December 6, 2010

Ms. Ashley R. Allen  
Staff Attorney  
Administrative Law Section  
Texas General Land Office  
P.O. Box 12873  
Austin, Texas 78711

OR2010-18233

Dear Ms. Allen:

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# 401994.

The Texas General Land Office ("GLO") received a request for GLO's complete file regarding the Cibola subdivision. Although you take no position on whether the requested information is excepted from disclosure, you state release of this information may implicate the proprietary interests of Edwards Coastal Land Development ("Edwards") and Mejia & Rose, Incorporated ("Mejia"). Accordingly, you have notified Edwards and Mejia of the request and of their right to submit arguments to this office as to why their information should not be released. *See* Gov't Code § 552.305(d) (permitting interested third party to submit to attorney general reasons why requested information should not be released); Open Records Decision No. 542 (1990) (statutory predecessor to section 552.305 permitted governmental body to rely on interested third party to raise and explain applicability of exception to disclosure under certain circumstances). We have reviewed the submitted information.

We note that an interested third party is allowed ten business days after the date of its receipt of the governmental body's notice to submit its reasons, if any, as to why information relating to that party should not be released. *See* Gov't Code § 552.305(d)(2)(B). As of the date of this decision, we have not received correspondence from Edwards and Mejia. Thus, Edwards and Mejia have not demonstrated that they have a protected proprietary interest in any of the submitted information. *See id.* § 552.110(a)-(b); Open Records Decision Nos. 661 at 5-6 (1999) (to prevent disclosure of commercial or financial information, party must show by specific factual evidence, not conclusory or generalized allegations, that release of requested information would cause that party substantial competitive harm), 552 at 5 (1990)

(party must establish *prima facie* case that information is trade secret), 542 at 3 (1990). Accordingly, GLO may not withhold the submitted information on the basis of any proprietary interests Edwards and Mejia may have in the information. We note, however, that some of the information may be subject to section 552.137 of the Government Code.<sup>1</sup>

Section 552.137 of the Government Code excepts from disclosure “an e-mail address of a member of the public that is provided for the purpose of communicating electronically with a governmental body,” unless the member of the public consents to its release or the e-mail address is of a type specifically excluded by subsection (c). See Gov’t Code § 552.137(a)-(c). The e-mail addresses we have marked in the information at issue are not specifically excluded by section 552.137(c). As such, the e-mail addresses we have marked must be withheld under section 552.137, unless the owners of the addresses have affirmatively consented to their release. See *id.* § 552.137(b).<sup>2</sup> The remaining information must be released.

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](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,



Vanessa Burgess  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

VB/dls

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<sup>1</sup>The 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).

<sup>2</sup>Open Records Decision No. 684 (2009) serves as a previous determination to all governmental bodies authorizing them to withhold ten categories of information; including e-mail addresses of members of the public under section 552.137, without the necessity of requesting an attorney general decision.

Ref: ID# 401994

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)

Ms. Angela Edwards  
Edwards Coastal Land Development  
72 Canterbury Circle  
East Longmeadow, Massachusetts 01028  
(Third Party w/o enclosures)

Mr. James E. Rose  
Mejia & Rose, Incorporated  
1643 West Price Road  
Brownsville, Texas 78520  
(Third Party w/o enclosures)