



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

September 14, 2011

Ms. Krista Cover
Assistant City Attorney
City of San Antonio
P.O. Box 839966
San Antonio, Texas 78283-3966

OR2011-13275

Dear Ms. Cover:

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# 430579 (ORR# W002146).

The City of San Antonio (the "city") received a request for statements, photographs, and estimates related to a specified accident. You claim the requested information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.103 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Initially, we note the request for information included "copies of any repair estimates and supplemental repair estimates and completed work order." However, the city did not submit any information responsive to this portion of the request. We assume that, to the extent any responsive "copies of any repair estimates and supplemental repair estimates and completed work order" existed when the city received the request for information, the city has released it to the requestor. If not, then the city must do so immediately. *See Gov't Code §§ 552.006, 552.301, 552.302; Open Records Decision No. 664 (2000).*

We next note the remaining requested categories of information consist of any statements taken from anyone and photographs related to the accident. However, although you submitted a responsive statement and photographs, you have submitted additional information that is not responsive to the requested categories of information. This ruling does not address the public availability of any information that is not responsive to the request, and the city is not required to release this information, which we have marked, in response to this request. *See Econ. Opportunities Dev. Corp. v. Bustamante, 562 S.W.2d 266 (Tex. App.—San Antonio 1978, writ dism'd).*

You assert the submitted responsive information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.103 of the Government Code, which provides in part as follows:

(a) Information is excepted from [required public disclosure] if it is information relating to litigation of a civil or criminal nature to which the state or a political subdivision is or may be a party or to which an officer or employee of the state or a political subdivision, as a consequence of the person's office or employment, is or may be a party.

...

(c) Information relating to litigation involving a governmental body or an officer or employee of a governmental body is excepted from disclosure under Subsection (a) only if the litigation is pending or reasonably anticipated on the date that the requestor applies to the officer for public information for access to or duplication of the information.

Gov't Code § 552.103(a), (c). The governmental body has the burden of providing relevant facts and documents to show the section 552.103(a) exception is applicable in a particular situation. The test for meeting this burden is a showing that (1) litigation is pending or reasonably anticipated on the date the governmental body received the request for information and (2) the information at issue is related to that litigation. *Univ. of Tex. Law Sch. v. Tex. Legal Found.*, 958 S.W.2d 479, 481 (Tex. App.—Austin 1997, no pet.); *Heard v. Houston Post Co.*, 684 S.W.2d 210, 212 (Tex. App.—Houston [1st Dist.] 1984, writ ref'd n.r.e.); Open Records Decision No. 551 at 4 (1990). The governmental body must meet both prongs of this test for information to be excepted from disclosure under section 552.103(a).

To establish litigation is reasonably anticipated, a governmental body must provide this office "concrete evidence showing that the claim that litigation may ensue is more than mere conjecture." Open Records Decision No. 452 at 4 (1986). Whether litigation is reasonably anticipated must be determined on a case-by-case basis. *Id.* In Open Records Decision No. 638 (1996), this office stated a governmental body has met its burden of showing litigation is reasonably anticipated by representing it received a notice-of-claim letter that is in compliance with the Texas Tort Claims Act ("TTCA"), chapter 101 of the Civil Practices and Remedies Code.

You state the city received a notice-of-claim letter prior to receiving the request for information and the notice complies with the requirements of the TTCA. Thus, we find the city reasonably anticipated litigation when it received the request for information. Our review of the submitted documents also shows they are related to the anticipated litigation for purposes of section 552.103(a). Therefore, the city may withhold the submitted responsive information from release under section 552.103 of the Government Code.¹

¹Because we are able to resolve this matter under section 552.103, we do not address your other arguments to withhold this information from release.

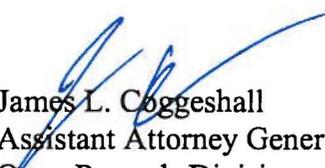
We note, however, once the information has been obtained by all parties to the anticipated litigation, no section 552.103(a) interest exists with respect to that information. Open Records Decision No. 349 at 2 (1982). We also note the applicability of section 552.103(a) ends when the litigation has concluded. Attorney General Opinion MW-575 (1982) at 2; Open Records Decision Nos. 350 at 3 (1982), 349 at 2.

To conclude, to the extent any responsive “copies of any repair estimates and supplemental repair estimates and completed work order” existed when the city received the request for information, the city must release such information to the requestor. The city may withhold the submitted responsive information from release pursuant to section 552.103 of the Government Code.

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,



James L. Coggeshall
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

JLC/eb

Ref: ID# 430579

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)