



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

August 21, 2012

Ms. Michelle M. Kretz
Assistant City Attorney
City of Fort Worth
1000 Throckmorton Street, 3rd Floor
Fort Worth, Texas 76102

OR2012-13167

Dear Ms. Kretz:

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# 467028 (PIR Nos. W018676, W018875, W018876, and W018884).

The City of Fort Worth (the "city") received four requests from three requestors for information pertaining to a specified incident. You state some information will be released. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101 and 552.108 of the Government Code. We have considered the claimed exceptions and reviewed the submitted information.

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 made confidential by other statutes, such as section 550.065 of the Transportation Code. This section provides that, except as provided by subsection (c), accident reports are privileged and confidential. Transp. Code § 550.065(b). You state the submitted information contains CR-3 accident report forms subject to section 550.065. Section 550.065(c)(4) of the Transportation Code, however, requires the release of accident reports to a person who provides two of the following three pieces of information: (1) date of the accident; (2) name of any person involved in the accident; and (3) specific location of the accident. *Id.* § 550.065(c)(4). In this instance, each requestor provided the city with two of the three requisite pieces of information specified by the statute. Although you seek to withhold this information under section 552.108 of the

Government Code, statutes governing the release of specific information prevail over the general exceptions to disclosure found in the Act. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 613 at 4 (1993) (exceptions in Act cannot impinge on statutory right of access to information), 451 (1986) (specific statutory right of access provisions overcome general exceptions to disclosure under the Act). Accordingly, the city must release the submitted CR-3 accident report forms to these requestors pursuant to section 550.065(b) of the Transportation Code.

You raise section 552.108 of the Government Code for the remaining information. Section 552.108(a)(1) excepts from disclosure “[i]nformation held by a law enforcement agency or prosecutor that deals with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime . . . if . . . release of the information would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime[.]” Gov’t Code § 552.108(a)(1). A governmental body must reasonably explain how release of the information at issue would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime. *See id.* § 552.301(e)(1)(A) (governmental body must provide comments explaining why exceptions raised should apply to information requested); *see also Ex parte Pruitt*, 551 S.W.2d 706 (Tex. 1977). You state, and provide an affidavit from the city’s police department demonstrating, the information at issue pertains to a pending criminal investigation. Based on your representation and our review of the information, we conclude release of the remaining information would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of a crime. *See Houston Chronicle Publ’g Co. v. City of Houston*, 531 S.W.2d 177 (Tex. Civ. App.—Houston [14th Dist.] 1975) (court describes law enforcement interests that are present in active cases), *writ ref’d per curiam*, 536 S.W.2d 559 (Tex. 1976). Therefore, section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code applies to the remaining information.

We note, however, 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*. *See* 531 S.W.2d at 186-88. Basic information must be released, even if it does not literally appear on the front page of the report. *See* Open Records Decision No. 127 (1976) (summarizing types of information deemed public by *Houston Chronicle*). Therefore, with the exception of basic information, which must be released, the city may withhold the remaining information under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code.

In summary, the city must release the CR-3 accident report forms pursuant to section 550.065(c) of the Transportation Code. With the exception of basic information, which must also be released, the city may withhold the remaining information under section 552.108(a)(1) 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Misty Haberer Barham". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Misty Haberer Barham
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

MHB/som

Ref: ID# 467028

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)