



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

November 5, 2012

Mr. Jason M. Rammel
Attorney for City of Hutto
Sheets & Crossfield, PC
309 East Main Street
Round Rock, Texas 78664-5246

OR2012-17669

Dear Mr. Rammel:

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# 474237.

The City of Hutto (the "city") received a request for information pertaining to a specified incident. You claim the submitted information is exempted from disclosure under sections 552.101 and 552.108 of the Government Code. We have considered the claimed exemptions and reviewed the submitted information.

We first note the submitted information contains a CR-3 accident report form subject to section 550.065 of the Transportation Code. This section provides that, except as provided by subsection (c) or (e), accident reports are privileged and confidential. Transp. Code § 550.065(b). Section 550.065(c)(4) 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, the requestor has provided the department with the required information specified by the statute. Although you seek to withhold this information under section 552.108 of the Government Code, information that is specifically made public by statute may not be withheld under the general exceptions to disclosure 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 department must release

the submitted CR-3 accident report form, which we have marked, 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 the submitted information pertains to a pending criminal investigation. Based on your representation and our review of the information, we conclude release of the information at issue 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 generally applies to the remaining information.

We note, however, the remaining information includes a DIC-24 statutory warning and a DIC-25 notice of suspension. The city provided copies of these forms to the arrestee. You have not explained how releasing this information, which has already been seen by the arrestee, would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime. *See* Gov’t Code § 552.108(a)(1). Accordingly, the DIC-24 and DIC-25 forms may not be withheld under section 552.108. In addition, 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 the DIC-24 and DIC-25 forms and basic information, the city may withhold the remaining information under section 552.108(a)(1).¹

We note the DIC-24 and DIC-25 forms contain the arrestee’s driver’s license information. Section 552.130 excepts from disclosure information that relates to a motor vehicle operator’s or driver’s license issued by an agency of this state or another state or country.²

¹Because our ruling is dispositive, we do not address your remaining argument against a portion of this information.

²The Office of the Attorney General will raise a mandatory exception on behalf of a governmental body, but ordinarily will not raise other exceptions. Open Records Decision Nos. 481 (1987), 480 (1987), 470 (1987).

Gov't Code § 552.130(a)(1). The city must withhold the arrestee's driver's license information, which we have marked, under section 552.130 in the DIC-24 and DIC-25 forms.

In summary, the city must release the marked CR-3 accident report form under section 550.065(b) of the Transportation Code. With the exception of the DIC-24 and DIC-25 forms and basic information, the city may withhold the remaining information under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code. The city must withhold the information we have marked in the DIC-24 and DIC-25 forms under section 552.130 of the Government Code. Basic information and the remaining information in the DIC-24 and DIC-25 forms 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, 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,



Misty Haberer Barham
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

MHB/som

Ref: ID# 474237

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)