



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS  
GREG ABBOTT

November 5, 2012

Mr. Scott Carlson  
General Counsel  
Dallas Area Rapid Transit  
P.O. Box 660163  
Dallas, Texas 75266-0163

OR2012-17709

Dear Mr. Carlson:

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# 469967 (DART ORR 8418).

Dallas Area Rapid Transit ("DART") received a request for information concerning traffic citations; warrants; booking photos; arrest logs during a specified period; and a list of individual or companies who have requested or are receiving any bulk data related to criminal, traffic, or warrant information. You claim that the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.101 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Initially, you state DART received the present request on May 8, 2012. You explain you requested a ruling from our office for information responsive to the May 8 request, in response to which we issued Open Records Letter No. 2012-12698 (2012). You state DART released that information with redactions made pursuant to Open Records Letter No. 2012-12698. You explain you now submit for our review additional documents that were responsive to the May 8 request, but which you inadvertently did not submit for our review when we issued Open Records Letter No. 2012-12698.

Next, we note, as in Open Records Letter No. 2012-12698, you have still not submitted information responsive to the request for a list of individual or companies who have requested or are receiving the bulk data. To the extent such information existed on the date DART received the request, we presume DART has released it. If not, DART must do so

at this time. *See* Gov't Code §§ 552.301, .302; *see also* Open Records Decision No. 664 (2000) (if governmental body concludes that no exceptions apply to the requested information, it must release the information as soon as possible).

As you acknowledge, DART failed to meet its procedural requirements under the Act in requesting a ruling regarding the submitted information. *See* Gov't Code § 552.301(b), (e). Pursuant to section 552.302 of the Government Code, a governmental body's failure to comply with the procedural requirements of section 552.301 results in the legal presumption that the information is public and must be released. Information presumed public must be released unless a governmental body demonstrates a compelling reason to withhold the information sufficient to overcome this presumption. *See id.* § 552.302; *Simmons v. Kuzmich*, 166 S.W.3d 342, 350 (Tex. App.—Fort Worth 2005, no pet.); *Hancock v. State Bd. of Ins.*, 797 S.W.2d 379, 381 (Tex. App.—Austin 1990, no writ) (governmental body must make compelling demonstration to overcome presumption of openness pursuant to statutory predecessor to section 552.302); Open Records Decision No. 630 (1994). A compelling reason exists when third-party interests are at stake or when information is confidential under other law. Open Records Decision No. 150 (1977). Your claim under section 552.101 of the Government Code can provide a compelling reason for non-disclosure; therefore we will address the applicability of this exception.

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 such as section 58.007 of the Family Code, which provides in pertinent part as follows:

(c) Except as provided by Subsection (d), law enforcement records and files concerning a child and information stored, by electronic means or otherwise, concerning the child from which a record or file could be generated may not be disclosed to the public and shall be:

- (1) if maintained on paper or microfilm, kept separate from adult files and records;
- (2) if maintained electronically in the same computer system as records or files relating to adults, be accessible under controls that are separate and distinct from controls to access electronic data concerning adults; and
- (3) maintained on a local basis only and not sent to a central state or federal depository, except as provided by Subchapters B, D, and E.

Fam. Code § 58.007(c). Juvenile law enforcement records relating to delinquent conduct or conduct indicating a need for supervision that occurred on or after September 1, 1997 are confidential under section 58.007. *See id.* § 51.03(a), (b) (defining "delinquent conduct"

and “conduct indicating a need for supervision”). For purposes of section 58.007(c), “child” means a person who is ten years of age or older and under seventeen years of age at the time of the conduct. *See id.* § 51.02(2). The information we have marked involves children engaged in delinquent conduct that occurred after September 1, 1997. As such, this information constitutes a juvenile law enforcement record that is confidential pursuant to section 58.007(c). It does not appear that any of the exceptions to confidentiality under section 58.007 apply in this instance. Accordingly, DART must withhold the information we have marked under section 552.101 in conjunction with section 58.007 of the Family Code.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code also encompasses section 261.201 of the Family Code, which provides, in relevant part:

(a) [T]he following information is confidential, is not subject to public release under [the Act], and may be disclosed only for purposes consistent with this code and applicable federal or state law or under rules adopted by an investigating agency:

(1) a report of alleged or suspected abuse or neglect made under [chapter 261 of the Family Code] and the identity of the person making the report; and

(2) except as otherwise provided in this section, the files, reports, records, communications, audiotapes, videotapes, and working papers used or developed in an investigation under [chapter 261 of the Family Code] or in providing services as a result of an investigation.

*Id.* § 261.201(a). Upon review, we find a portion of the remaining information pertains to an investigation of alleged or suspected child abuse and, thus, falls within the scope of section 261.201 of the Family Code. *See id.* §§ 101.003(a) (defining “child” for purposes of this section as person under 18 years of age who is not and has not been married or who has not had the disabilities of minority removed for general purposes), 261.001(1) (defining “abuse” for purposes of chapter 261 of the Family Code). As you do not indicate DART has adopted a rule that governs the release of this type of information, we assume no such regulation exists. Given that assumption, and based on our review, we determine the information we have marked is confidential pursuant to section 261.201 of the Family Code and must be withheld under section 552.101. *See* Open Records Decision No. 440 at 2 (1986) (predecessor statute).

Section 552.101 of the Government Code also encompasses constitutional and common-law rights to privacy. Constitutional privacy protects two kinds of interests. *See Whalen v. Roe*, 429 U.S. 589, 599-600 (1977); Open Records Decision Nos. 600 at 3-5 (1992), 478 at 4 (1987), 455 at 3-7 (1987). The first is the interest in independence in making certain important decisions relating to the “zones of privacy” pertaining to marriage, procreation,

contraception, family relationships, and child rearing and education the United States Supreme Court has recognized. *See Fajjo v. Coon*, 633 F.2d 1172 (5th Cir. 1981); ORD 455 at 3-7. The second constitutionally protected privacy interest is in freedom from public disclosure of certain personal matters. *See Ramie v. City of Hedwig Village, Tex.*, 765 F.2d 490 (5th Cir. 1985); ORD 455 at 6-7. This aspect of constitutional privacy balances the individual's privacy interest against the public's interest in the information. *See* ORD 455 at 7. Constitutional privacy under section 552.101 is reserved for "the most intimate aspects of human affairs" and the scope of information protected is narrower than that under the common-law doctrine of privacy. *Id.* at 5 (internal quotations omitted) (quoting *Ramie*, 765 F.2d at 492).

Common-law privacy protects information if it (1) contains highly intimate or embarrassing facts, the publication of which would be highly objectionable to a reasonable person, and (2) is not of legitimate concern to the public. *Indus. Found. v. Tex. Indus. Accident Bd.*, 540 S.W.2d 668, 685 (Tex. 1976). To demonstrate the applicability of common-law privacy, both prongs of this test must be established. *Id.* at 681-82. The types of information considered highly intimate or embarrassing by the Texas Supreme Court in *Industrial Foundation* included information relating to sexual assault, pregnancy, mental or physical abuse in the workplace, illegitimate children, psychiatric treatment of mental disorders, attempted suicide, and injuries to sexual organs. *Id.* at 683. This office has determined other types of information are private under section 552.101. *See generally* Open Records Decision No. 659 at 4-5 (1999) (summarizing information attorney general has held to be private).

You contend portions of the submitted information are protected under constitutional and common-law privacy. Upon review, we find you have not demonstrated any of the remaining information falls within the zones of privacy or otherwise implicates an individual's privacy interests for the purposes of constitutional privacy. We also find you have not demonstrated any of the remaining information is highly intimate or embarrassing and not a matter of legitimate public interest. We therefore conclude DART may not withhold any of the remaining information under section 552.101 in conjunction with constitutional or common-law privacy.

We note portions of the remaining information are subject to section 552.130 of the Government Code.<sup>1</sup> Section 552.130 provides information relating to a motor vehicle operator's or driver's license or permit, a motor vehicle title or registration, or a personal identification document issued by an agency of Texas or another state or country is excepted from public release. Gov't Code § 552.130(a). We find DART must withhold the motor

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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).

vehicle record information, a representative sample of which we have marked, under section 552.130.

In summary, DART must withhold the information we have marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 58.007 of the Family Code and section 261.201 of the Family Code. DART must withhold the motor vehicle record information, a representative sample of which we have marked, under section 552.130 of the Government Code. DART must release the remaining information.

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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](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,



Lindsay E. Hale  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

LEH/tch

Ref: ID# 469967

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)