ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

January 9, 2013

Ms. Sol M. Cortez
Assistant City Attorney
The City of El Paso
2 Civic Center Plaza, Ninth Floor
El Paso, Texas 79901

OR2013-00513

Dear Ms. Cortez:

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# 475641.

The City of El Paso (the "city") received a request for information pertaining to a specified incident. You claim that the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101 and 552.108 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim 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. 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). 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, the requestor has not provided the city with two of the three requisite pieces of information specified by the statute. Accordingly, the city must withhold the submitted CR-3 accident report form from this requestor under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with 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)(2) excepts from disclosure "[i]nformation held by a law enforcement agency or prosecutor that deals with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime . . . if . . . it is information that deals with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime only in relation to an investigation that did not result in conviction or deferred adjudication." Gov't Code § 552.108(a)(2). A governmental body claiming section 552.108(a)(2) must demonstrate the requested information relates to a criminal investigation that has concluded in a final result other than a conviction or deferred adjudication. *See id.* § 552.301(e)(1)(A) (governmental body must provide comments explaining why exceptions raised should apply to information requested). You state the submitted information pertains to an incident that did not result in conviction or deferred adjudication. Based on your representation and our review, we find section 552.108(a)(2) applies to the remaining information.

However, section 552.108 does not except from disclosure basic information about an arrested person, an arrest, or a crime. *Id.* § 552.108(c). Basic information refers to the information held to be public in *Houston Chronicle Publishing Co. v. City of Houston*, 531 S.W.2d 177 (Tex. Civ. App.—Houston [14th Dist.] 1975) (summarizing types of information considered to be basic information), *writ ref'd n.r.e. per curiam*, 536 S.W.2d 559 (Tex. 1976). Basic information must be released even if it does not literally appear on the front page of an offense or arrest report. *See* Open Records Decision No. 127 (1976) (summarizing types of information deemed public by *Houston Chronicle*). Thus, with the exception of basic information, the city may withhold the remaining information under section 552.108(a)(2) of the Government Code.

We understand you to claim the basic information contains information protected by common-law privacy. 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. Section 552.101 encompasses the doctrine of common-law privacy, which protects information that (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 satisfied. *Id.* at 681-82.

The types of information considered intimate and 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. Upon review, we find that no portion of the basic information is highly intimate or embarrassing and not of legitimate public interest. Thus, none of the basic information may be withheld under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy.

In summary, the city must withhold the submitted CR-3 accident report form under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with section 550.065(b) of the Transportation Code. With the exception of basic information, which must be released, the city may withhold the remaining information under section 552.108(a)(2) 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,

Jeffrey W. Giles

Jeffrey W. Giles
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

JWG/dls

Ref: ID# 475641

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)