



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS  
GREG ABBOTT

September 18, 2013

Mr. Charles H. Weir  
Assistant City Attorney  
Office of the City Attorney  
City of San Antonio  
P.O. Box 839966  
San Antonio, Texas 78283-3966

OR2013-16225

Dear Mr. Weir:

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# 499783 (COSA File No. W016527).

The City of San Antonio (the "city") received a request for information regarding a specified incident, including a specified photograph, a specified text message, any video recordings of the incident, and the final investigation report of the incident. You state the city does not have any information responsive to the request for the text message, video recordings, or final investigation report.<sup>1</sup> You claim 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. We have also considered comments submitted by the requestor. See Gov't Code § 552.304 (interested party may submit comments stating why information should or should not be released).

Initially, we must address the city's obligations under section 552.301 of the Government Code, which prescribes the procedures a governmental body must follow in asking this

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<sup>1</sup>The Act does not require a governmental body to release information that did not exist when it received a request or to create responsive information. See *Economic Opportunities Dev. Corp. v. Bustamante*, 562 S.W.2d 266 (Tex. Civ. App. – San Antonio 1978, writ dismissed); Open Records Decision Nos. 605 at 2 (1992), 555 at 1 (1990), 452 at 3 (1986), 362 at 2 (1983).

office to decide whether requested information is excepted from public disclosure. *See id.* § 552.301. Pursuant to section 552.301(e), a governmental body must submit to this office within fifteen business days of receiving an open records request (1) written comments stating the reasons why the stated exceptions apply that would allow the information to be withheld, (2) a copy of the written request for information, (3) a signed statement or sufficient evidence showing the date the governmental body received the written request, and (4) a copy of the specific information requested or representative samples, labeled to indicate which exceptions apply to which parts of the documents. *See id.* § 552.301(e). You state the city received the request for information on June 25, 2013. We note this office does not count the date the request was received or holidays for the purpose of calculating a governmental body's deadlines under the Act. Accordingly, the city was required to provide the information required by section 552.301(e) by July 17, 2013. However, the envelope in which the city provided the information required by section 552.301(e) was postmarked July 18, 2013. *See id.* § 552.308(a)(1) (describing rules for calculating submission dates of documents sent via first class United States mail, common or contract carrier, or interagency mail). Accordingly, we conclude the city failed to comply with the procedural requirements mandated by section 552.301 of the Government Code.

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 requested information is public and must be released unless there is a compelling reason to withhold the information from disclosure. *See id.* § 552.302; *Simmons v. Kuzmich*, 166 S.W.3d 342 (Tex. App.—Fort Worth 2005, no pet.); *Hancock v. State Bd. of Ins.*, 797 S.W.2d 379, 381-82 (Tex. App.—Austin 1990, no writ); *see also* Open Records Decision No. 630 (1994). Generally, a governmental body may demonstrate a compelling reason to withhold information by showing that the information is made confidential by another source of law or affects third party interests. *See* ORD 630. Because section 552.101 of the Government Code can provide a compelling reason to overcome this presumption, we will address the applicability of that section to the submitted information.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code excepts "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 constitutional privacy. Constitutional privacy consists of two interrelated types of privacy: (1) the right to make certain kinds of decisions independently and (2) an individual's interest in avoiding disclosure of personal matters. Open Records Decision No. 455 at 4 (1987). The first type protects an individual's autonomy within "zones of privacy" which include matters related to marriage, procreation, contraception, family relationships, and child rearing and education. *Id.* at 3-7. The second type of constitutional privacy requires a balancing between the individual's privacy interests and the public's need to know information of public concern. *Id.* at 6-7. The scope of information protected is narrower than that under the common law doctrine of privacy; the information must concern the "most intimate aspects of human affairs." *Id.* at 5 (quoting *Ramie v. City of Hedwig Village, Texas*, 765 F.2d 490 (5th Cir. 1985)).

Upon review, we find the submitted photograph implicates the privacy interests of the individuals depicted. While there is public interest in this information, we conclude the individuals depicted have a legitimate expectation of privacy in this image that outweighs the public interest. Therefore, we conclude the city must withhold the submitted photograph under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with constitutional privacy.<sup>2</sup>

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.texasattorneygeneral.gov/open/orl\\_ruling\\_info.shtml](http://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/open/orl_ruling_info.shtml), 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 may be directed to the Office of the Attorney General, toll free, at (888) 672-6787.

Sincerely,



Kristi L. Wilkins  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

KLW/bhf

Ref: ID# 499783

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)

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<sup>2</sup>As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address the city's argument against its disclosure.