



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS  
GREG ABBOTT

July 18, 2014

Ms. Lisa D. Mares  
Counsel for City of McKinney  
Brown & Hofmeister, L.L.P.  
740 East Campbell Road, Suite 800  
Richardson, Texas 75081

OR2014-12440

Dear Ms. Mares:

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# 529931 (McKinney ID# 10-10238).

The City of McKinney (the "city") received a request for information pertaining to a specified investigation. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.103 and 552.107 of the Government Code.<sup>1</sup> We have considered the exceptions you claim and reviewed the submitted representative sample of information.<sup>2</sup>

Initially, we note some of the submitted information, which we have marked, is not responsive to the instant request because it was created after the date of the request. This ruling does not address the public availability of any information that is not responsive to the request and the city is not required to release such information in response to this request.

---

<sup>1</sup>Although you also raise sections 552.101 and 552.102 for the submitted information, you provide no arguments explaining how these exceptions are applicable to the information at issue. Therefore, we assume you no longer assert these exceptions. *See* Gov't Code §§ 552.301, .302.

<sup>2</sup>We assume the representative sample of records submitted to this office is truly representative of the requested records as a whole. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 499 (1988), 497 (1988). This open records letter does not reach, and therefore does not authorize the withholding of, any other requested records to the extent that those records contain substantially different types of information than that submitted to this office.

Next, we note a portion of the requested information was the subject of a previous request for information, in response to which this office issued Open Records Letter No. 2014-12245 (2014). In Open Records Letter No. 2014-12245, we concluded the city must release certain information pursuant to section 552.022 of the Government Code and may withhold certain information under section 552.103 of the Government Code. There is no indication the law, facts, and circumstances on which the prior ruling was based have changed. Accordingly, for the requested information that is identical to the information previously requested and ruled upon by this office, we conclude the city may continue to rely on Open Records Letter No. 2014-12245 as a previous determination and withhold or release the identical information in accordance with that ruling.<sup>3</sup> *See* Open Records Decision No. 673 (2001) (so long as law, facts, and circumstances on which prior ruling was based have not changed, first type of previous determination exists where requested information is precisely same information as was addressed in prior attorney general ruling, ruling is addressed to same governmental body, and ruling concludes information is or is not excepted from disclosure).

Next, we address your arguments against the disclosure of the submitted responsive information that is not subject to that prior ruling. Section 552.103 of the Government Code provides, in relevant part:

(a) Information is excepted from [required public disclosure] if it is information relating to litigation of a civil or criminal nature to which the state or a political subdivision is or may be a party or to which an officer or employee of the state or a political subdivision, as a consequence of the person's office or employment, is or may be a party.

...

(c) Information relating to litigation involving a governmental body or an officer or employee of a governmental body is excepted from disclosure under Subsection (a) only if the litigation is pending or reasonably anticipated on the date that the requestor applies to the officer for public information for access to or duplication of the information.

Gov't Code § 552.103(a), (c). The purpose of section 552.103 is to enable a governmental body to protect its position in litigation by forcing parties to obtain information relating to litigation through discovery procedures. *See* Open Records Decision No. 551 at 4-5 (1990). A governmental body has the burden of providing relevant facts and documents to show the section 552.103(a) exception applies in a particular situation. The test for meeting this burden is a showing (1) litigation was pending or reasonably anticipated on the date the governmental body received the request for information, and (2) the requested information

---

<sup>3</sup>As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address your arguments against disclosure of this information.

is related to that litigation. *See Univ. of Tex. Law Sch. v. Tex. Legal Found.*, 958 S.W.2d 479, 481 (Tex. App.—Austin 1997, orig. proceeding); *Heard v. Houston Post Co.*, 684 S.W.2d 210, 212 (Tex. App.—Houston [1st Dist.] 1984, writ ref'd n.r.e.); ORD 551 at 4. The governmental body must meet both parts of this test for information to be excepted under section 552.103(a). *See* ORD 551 at 4.

The question of whether litigation is reasonably anticipated must be determined on a case-by-case basis. *See* Open Records Decision No. 452 at 4 (1986). To establish litigation is reasonably anticipated, the governmental body must furnish concrete evidence that litigation involving a specific matter is realistically contemplated and is more than mere conjecture. *Id.* This office has found a pending complaint with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (“EEOC”) indicates litigation is reasonably anticipated. *See* Open Records Decisions Nos. 386 at 2 (1983), 336 at 1 (1982), 281 at 1 (1981).

You state, and provide documentation showing, a city employee filed a discrimination claim with the EEOC prior to the date of the city’s receipt of this request for information. Based on your representations and our review of the information at issue, we find the city reasonably anticipated litigation on the date this request was received. We also find the city has established the information at issue is related to the anticipated litigation for purposes of section 552.103(a). Therefore, the city may withhold the remaining responsive information under section 552.103(a) of the Government Code.<sup>4</sup>

Generally, however, once information has been obtained by all parties to the litigation through discovery or otherwise, no section 552.103(a) interest exists with respect to that information. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 349 (1982), 320 (1982). Thus, information that has either been obtained from or provided to all parties to the litigation is not excepted from disclosure under section 552.103(a) and must be disclosed. Further, the applicability of section 552.103(a) ends once the litigation has been concluded or is no longer anticipated. *See* Attorney General Opinion MW-575 (1982); *see also* Open Records Decision No. 350 (1982).

In summary, the city may continue to rely on Open Records Letter No. 2014-12245 as a previous determination and withhold or release the identical information in accordance with that ruling. The city may withhold the remaining responsive information under section 552.103 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.

---

<sup>4</sup>As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address your remaining argument against disclosure of this information.

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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paige Thompson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Paige Thompson  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

PT/dls

Ref: ID# 529931

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)