



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

November 10, 2016

Mr. Nicholas Toulet
Assistant City Attorney
City Attorney's Office
City of Midland
P.O. Box 1152
Midland, Texas 79702-1152

OR2016-25086

Dear Mr. Toulet:

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# 634414 (CoM ID# 20479).

The City of Midland (the "city") received a request for a specified bid proposal. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.104 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Section 552.104(a) of the Government Code excepts from disclosure "information that, if released, would give advantage to a competitor or bidder." Gov't Code § 552.104(a). The "test under section 552.104 is whether knowing another bidder's [or competitor's information] would be an advantage, not whether it would be a decisive advantage." *Boeing Co. v. Paxton*, 466 S.W.3d 831 (Tex. 2015). The request indicates the information at issue relates to a previous request for proposals that is now closed. However, the city states the company the requestor represents has indicated an interest in bidding on a future contract to provide pest control services to the city. The city contends release of the submitted information would "provide the requestor with an advantage if the requestor should decide to submit a bid to provide the [c]ity with pest control services." For many years, this office concluded the terms of a contract and especially the pricing of a winning bidder are public and generally not excepted from disclosure. Gov't Code § 552.022(a)(3) (contract involving

receipt or expenditure of public funds expressly made public); Open Records Decision Nos. 541 at 8 (1990) (public has interest in knowing terms of contract with state agency), 514 (1988) (public has interest in knowing prices charged by government contractors), 494 (1988) (requiring balancing of public interest in disclosure with competitive injury to company). *See generally* Freedom of Information Act Guide & Privacy Act Overview, 219 (2000) (federal cases applying analogous Freedom of Information Act reasoning that disclosure of prices charged government is a cost of doing business with government). However, now, pursuant to *Boeing*, section 552.104 is not limited to only ongoing competitive situations, and it need only be shown release of competitively sensitive information would give an advantage to a competitor even after a contract is executed. *Boeing*, 466 S.W.3d at 841. After review of the information at issue and consideration of the arguments, we find the city has established the release of the information would give advantage to a competitor or bidder. Thus, we conclude the city may withhold the submitted information under section 552.104(a) 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.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,



Gerald A. Arismendez
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

GAA/som

Ref: ID# 634414

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)