



Office of the Attorney General
State of Texas

DAN MORALES
ATTORNEY GENERAL

June 30, 1997

Ms. Tatia R. Randolph
Assistant City Attorney
Criminal Law and Police Division
City of Dallas
Municipal Building
Dallas, Texas 75201

OR97-1503

Dear Ms. Randolph:

You ask whether certain information is subject to required public disclosure under the Texas Open Records Act, chapter 552 of the Government Code. Your request was assigned ID# 107650.

The City of Dallas (the "city") received an open records request for photographs of a traffic accident scene that you contend may be withheld from the public pursuant to the Texas Open Records Act, section 552.103(a) of the Government Code. To secure the protection of section 552.103(a), a governmental body must demonstrate that the requested information relates to pending or reasonably anticipated litigation to which the governmental body is or may be a party. Open Records Decision No. 588 (1991) at 1. In this instance you have made the requisite showing that the requested information relates to pending litigation for purposes of section 552.103(a) and that the city reasonably anticipates becoming a party to that litigation. The requested records may therefore be withheld.

In reaching this conclusion, however, we assume that the other parties to the litigation have not previously had access to the records at issue; absent special circumstances, once information has been obtained by all parties to the litigation, *e.g.*, through discovery or otherwise, no section 552.103(a) interest exists with respect to that information. Open Records Decision Nos. 349 (1982), 320 (1982). If the other parties in the litigation have seen or had access to any of the information in these records, there would be no justification for now withholding that information from the requestor pursuant to section 552.103(a). We also note that the applicability of section 552.103(a) ends once the litigation has been concluded. Attorney General Opinion MW-575 (1982); Open Records Decision No. 350 (1982).

We are resolving this matter with an informal letter ruling rather than with a published open records decision. This ruling is limited to the particular records at issue under the facts presented to us in this request and should not be relied upon as a previous determination regarding any other records. If you have questions about this ruling, please contact our office.

Yours very truly,



Kay Hamilton Guajardo
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

KHG/RWP/rho

Ref.: ID# 107650

Enclosures: Photographs

cc: Mr. Carl Huddleston
Paralegal
Dallas Area Rapid Transit
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(w/o enclosures)