



OFFICE *of the* ATTORNEY GENERAL  
GREG ABBOTT

July 21, 2003

Ms. Elizabeth Elam  
Taylor Olson Adkins Sralla Elam, L.L.P.  
6000 Western Place, Suite 200  
Fort Worth, Texas 76107-4654

OR2003-5007

Dear Ms. Elam:

You ask whether certain information is subject to required public disclosure under chapter 552 of the Government Code. Your request was assigned ID# 184599.

The City of River Oaks (the "city"), which you represent, received a request for, among other things, "documents related to the baseline used in the [specified] report." You state that you have provided all other requested information to the requestor, and that you are not opposed to releasing the "baseline" documents. However, you have submitted correspondence from the Texas Department of Public Safety ("department") in which it claims that the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with chapter 730 of the Transportation Code and section 521.051 of the Transportation Code. *See* Gov't Code § 552.304 (providing that interested party may submit comments stating why information should or should not be released). We have considered the department's arguments and reviewed the submitted information.

Section 521.051 of the Transportation Code states that the department "may not disclose class-type listings from the basic driver's license file to any person" except in certain situations as described in section 521.049(c) of the Transportation Code. Section 521.049(c) provides that the department may make class-type listings available "to an official of the United States, the state, or a political subdivision of this state for governmental purposes only."

In Open Records Decision No. 618 (1993), this office determined the purpose of the statutory predecessor to section 521.051 "appears to be to relieve the department of the administrative burden of compiling a list based primarily on location and existence of traffic convictions, *i.e.*, a class type list, when the requestor does not have individual driver's license numbers

or names." Open Records Decision No. 618 at 3. We agreed the provision limits access when the requestor seeks license listings by specific type, such as "a list of licensees who have traffic convictions on file, or a list of those who might be subject to administrative hearings to suspend their license." *Id.*

The department contends that the submitted information constitutes a class-type listing, and therefore, the city may not comply with the request. Based on our review of the submitted information, we conclude that it does not consist of a class-type listing for the purposes of section 521.051. *Id.* at 3 (1993) (examples of class-type listings). Therefore, section 521.051 of the Transportation Code is inapplicable to the submitted information.

Furthermore, in Open Records Decision No. 618, we also noted that while section 521.051 restricts access to class listings, it does not make the information confidential by law under section 552.101 of the Government Code. *Id.* at 3 n.3; *see also* Open Records Decision Nos. 658 at 4 (1998) (statutory confidentiality provision must be express and cannot be implied), 478 at 2 (1987) (language of confidentiality statute controls scope of protection), 465 at 4-5 (1987) (statute explicitly required confidentiality). Additionally, this prohibition on the release of information does not apply to the city. *Cf.* Open Records Decision No. 155 (1977) (information not confidential when held by city as employer charged with discrimination). Consequently, even if the submitted information constituted a class-type listing, section 521.051 of the Transportation Code does not make the submitted information confidential, and it is not applicable to the city. Thus, the city may not withhold the submitted information under this section.

Next, we address the department's argument under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with chapter 730 of the Transportation Code.<sup>1</sup> Section 730.004 of the Transportation Code provides:

Notwithstanding any other provisions of law to the contrary, including chapter 552, Government Code, except as provided by Sections 730.005 – 730.008, an agency may not disclose personal information about any person obtained by the agency in connection with a motor vehicle record.

Section 730.003 provides that, for purposes of chapter 730 of the Transportation Code:

(6) "Personal information" means information that identifies a person, including an individual's photograph or computerized image, social security number, driver identification number, name, address, but not the zip code, telephone number, and medical or disability information. The term does not include:

---

<sup>1</sup>Section 552.101 excepts from disclosure "information considered to be confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision."

(A) information on vehicle accidents, driving or equipment-related violations, or driver's license or registration status; or

(B) information contained in an accident report prepared under Chapter 550 or 601.

Transp. Code § 730.003(6). Section 730.004 applies only to “personal information,” which does not include “information on vehicle accidents, driving or equipment-related violations, or driver's license or registration status.” See Transp. Code § 730.003(6). After reviewing the submitted information, we find that it is not “personal information.” Accordingly, we find that the city may not withhold any of the submitted information under chapter 730 of the Transportation Code, and it must be released in its entirety.

This letter ruling is limited to the particular records 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 records or any other circumstances.

This ruling triggers important deadlines regarding the rights and responsibilities of the governmental body and of the requestor. For example, governmental bodies are prohibited from asking the attorney general to reconsider this ruling. Gov't Code § 552.301(f). If the governmental body wants to challenge this ruling, the governmental body must appeal by filing suit in Travis County within 30 calendar days. *Id.* § 552.324(b). In order to get the full benefit of such an appeal, the governmental body must file suit within 10 calendar days. *Id.* § 552.353(b)(3), (c). If the governmental body does not appeal this ruling and the governmental body does not comply with it, then both the requestor and the attorney general have the right to file suit against the governmental body to enforce this ruling. *Id.* § 552.321(a).

If this ruling requires the governmental body to release all or part of the requested information, the governmental body is responsible for taking the next step. Based on the statute, the attorney general expects that, within 10 calendar days of this ruling, the governmental body will do one of the following three things: 1) release the public records; 2) notify the requestor of the exact day, time, and place that copies of the records will be provided or that the records can be inspected; or 3) notify the requestor of the governmental body's intent to challenge this letter ruling in court. If the governmental body fails to do one of these three things within 10 calendar days of this ruling, then the requestor should report that failure to the attorney general's Open Government Hotline, toll free, at (877) 673-6839. The requestor may also file a complaint with the district or county attorney. *Id.* § 552.3215(e).

If this ruling requires or permits the governmental body to withhold all or some of the requested information, the requestor can appeal that decision by suing the governmental body. *Id.* § 552.321(a); *Texas Dep't of Pub. Safety v. Gilbreath*, 842 S.W.2d 408, 411 (Tex. App.—Austin 1992, no writ).

Please remember that under the Act the release of information triggers certain procedures for costs and charges to the requestor. If records are released in compliance with this ruling, be sure that all charges for the information are at or below the legal amounts. Questions or complaints about over-charging must be directed to Hadassah Schloss at the Texas Building and Procurement Commission at (512) 475-2497.

If the governmental body, the requestor, or any other person has questions or comments about this ruling, they may contact our office. We note that a third party may challenge this ruling by filing suit seeking to withhold information from a requestor. Gov't Code § 552.325. Although there is no statutory deadline for contacting us, the attorney general prefers to receive any comments within 10 calendar days of the date of this ruling.

Sincerely,



W. Montgomery Meitler  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

WMM/lmt

Ref: ID# 184599

Enc: Submitted documents

c: Mr. Will Harrell  
Executive Director  
ACLU of Texas  
P.O. Box 3629  
Austin, Texas 78764  
(w/o enclosures)

Ms. Joyce E. Stevens  
Manager  
Driver Records Bureau  
Texas Department of Public Safety  
P.O. Box 4087  
Austin, Texas 78773-0001  
(w/o enclosures)