ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

April 11, 2006

Ms. Maleshia B. Farmer
Assistant City Attorney
City of Fort Worth
1000 Throckmorton Street
Fort Worth, Texas 76102

OR2006-03608

Dear Ms. Farmer:

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# 246283.

The City of Fort Worth (the "city") received a request for a specified offense report. You claim that the requested information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101 and 552.108 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Section 552.101 excepts from disclosure "information considered to be confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision." Gov't Code §552.101. This section encompasses statutory confidentiality provisions. You contend that Exhibit D is confidential under section 48.101 of the Human Resources Code, which pertains to the disclosure of reports of abuse, neglect, or exploitation of elderly and disabled persons in certain facilities. Section 48.101 provides in pertinent part as follows:

> (a) The following information is confidential and not subject to disclosure under Chapter 552, Government Code:
>
> > (1) a report of abuse, neglect, or exploitation made under this chapter;
> >
> > (2) the identity of the person making the report; and

> (3) except as provided by this section, all files, reports, records, communications, and working papers used or developed in an investigation made under this chapter or in providing services as a result of an investigation.
>
> (b) Confidential information may be disclosed only for a purpose consistent with this chapter and as provided by department or investigating state agency rule and applicable federal law.

Hum. Res. Code § 48.101. The only entities authorized to conduct an investigation under chapter 48 of the Human Resources Code are the Department of Protective and Regulatory Services and certain other state agencies, depending on the circumstances surrounding the incident. *See* Hum. Res. Code §§ 48.151, 48.152, 48.252, 48.301. Thus, records of a police department investigation generally are not subject to section 48.101. The records in Exhibit D reflect that they were created by the Fort Worth Police Department (the "department") pursuant to the department's own investigation of an alleged crime. We determine that the submitted police investigation records in Exhibit D were not used or developed in an investigation made under chapter 48 of the Human Resources Code. Accordingly, we determine that no portion of Exhibit D may be withheld under section 552.101 in conjunction with section 48.101 of the Human Resources Code.

You also assert that the submitted information is excepted from public disclosure under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code. Section 552.108(a) excepts from disclosure "[i]nformation held by a law enforcement agency or prosecutor that deals with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime . . . if: (1) release of the information would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime." Generally, a governmental body claiming section 552.108 must reasonably explain how and why the release of the requested information would interfere with law enforcement. *See* Gov't Code §§ 552.108(a)(1),.301(e)(1)(A); *see also Ex parte Pruitt*, 551 S.W.2d 706 (Tex. 1977). You state that the information at issue relates to a pending prosecution. Based upon this representation, we conclude that the release of this information would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime. *See Houston Chronicle Publ'g Co. v. City of Houston*, 531 S.W.2d 177 (Tex. Civ. App.—Houston [14th Dist.] 1975), *writ ref'd n.r.e. per curiam*, 536 S.W.2d 559 (Tex. 1976) (court delineates law enforcement interests that are present in active cases). Thus, section 552.108(a)(1) is applicable to the information at issue.

We note, however, section 552.108 does not except from disclosure basic information about an arrest, an arrested person, or a crime. Gov't Code § 552.108(c); *see* Open Records Decision No. 127 at 3-4 (1976) (summarizing types of information deemed public by *Houston Chronicle*). Thus, except for basic information, the city may withhold the information at issue pursuant to section 552.108(a)(1). We note that you have the discretion to release all or part of this information that is not otherwise confidential by law. *See* Gov't Code § 552.007.

Lastly, we note that under section 552.147 of the Government Code, "[t]he social security number of a living person is excepted from" required public disclosure under the Act. The city must withhold the social security number of the arrested person under section 552.147.[1]

In summary, except for basic information, the city may withhold the information at issue pursuant to section 552.108(a)(1). The city must withhold the social security number of the arrested person under section 552.147. The remaining information must be released to the requestor.

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, upon receiving this ruling, the governmental body will either release the public records promptly pursuant to section 552.221(a) of the Government Code or file a lawsuit challenging this ruling pursuant to section 552.324 of the Government Code. If the governmental body fails to do one of these things, 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).

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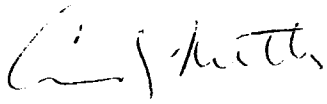
[1]We note that section 552.147(b) of the Government Code authorizes a governmental body to redact a living person's social security number from public release without the necessity of requesting a decision from this office under the Act.

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 Office of the Attorney General 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. 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,



Cindy Nettles
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

CN/er

Ref: ID# 246283

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Ms. Judy Carey
2722 East Vickery Boulevard
Fort Worth, Texas 76105
(w/o enclosures)