



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

January 3, 2007

Mr. Peter G. Smith
City Attorney
City of Richardson
P.O. Box 831078
Richardson, Texas 75083-1078

OR2007-00037

Dear Mr. Smith:

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# 271750.

The City of Richardson (the "city") received a request for information relating to certain abductions, attempted abductions, and sexual assaults. You indicate that the city has released some of the requested information. You claim that the remaining information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101 and 552.108 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim and have reviewed the information you submitted.¹

Section 552.108 of the Government Code excepts from public disclosure "[i]nformation held by a law enforcement agency or prosecutor that deals with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime . . . if . . . release of the information would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime[.]" Gov't Code § 552.108(a)(1). A governmental body that claims an exception to disclosure under section 552.108 must reasonably explain how and why this exception is applicable to the information at issue. *See id.* § 552.301(e)(1)(A); *Ex parte Pruitt*, 551 S.W.2d 706 (Tex. 1977). You state that the

¹This letter ruling assumes that the submitted representative sample of information is truly representative of the requested information as a whole. This ruling neither reaches nor authorizes the city to withhold any information that is substantially different from the submitted information. *See Gov't Code* §§ 552.301(e)(1)(D), .302; *Open Records Decision Nos. 499 at 6 (1988), 497 at 4 (1988).*

information at issue is related to a pending criminal investigation. Based on your representation, we conclude that section 552.108(a)(1) is applicable in this instance. 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).

Section 552.108 does not except from disclosure “basic information about an arrested person, an arrest, or a crime.” Gov’t Code § 552.108(c). Section 552.108(c) refers to the basic front-page information held to be public in *Houston Chronicle*. The city must release basic information under section 552.108(c), even if the information does not literally appear on the front page of an offense or arrest report. We note that basic information includes the identity of the complainant and a detailed description of the offense. See Open Records Decision No. 127 at 3-4 (1976) (summarizing types of information deemed public by *Houston Chronicle*). Because the submitted information relates to an alleged sexual offense, the city would ordinarily be required to withhold the identity of the complainant from the public under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common law privacy. See Gov’t Code § 552.101; *Indus. Found. v. Tex. Indus. Accident Bd.*, 540 S.W.2d 668, 685 (Tex. 1976); Open Records Decision Nos. 393 (1983), 339 (1982). In this instance, however, the complainant is identified by pseudonym. Therefore, the city must release basic information in accordance with section 552.108(c). The city may withhold the rest of the requested information under section 552.108(a)(1).

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.² Gov’t Code § 552.147(a). The city must withhold the social security number of an arrested person under section 552.147.

In summary: (1) the city may withhold the information at issue under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code, except for the basic information that must be released under section 552.108(c); and (2) the city must withhold the social security number of an arrested person under section 552.147 of the Government Code.

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

²We also 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.

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).

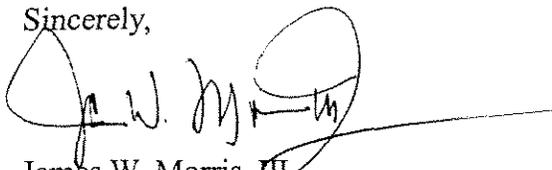
If this ruling requires the governmental body to release all or part of the requested information, the governmental body is responsible for taking the next step. Based on the statute, the attorney general expects that, upon receiving this ruling, the governmental body will either release the public records 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).

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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James W. Morris, III", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

James W. Morris, III
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

JWM/vh

Ref: ID# 271750

Enc: Submitted documents

c: Mr. Mike Pool
CBS 11 News
10111 North Central Expressway
Dallas, Texas 75231
(w/o enclosures)