



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS
GREG ABBOTT

June 12, 2008

Ms. Deborah S. Cartwright
General Counsel
Bexar Appraisal District
P.O. Box 830248
San Antonio, Texas 78283-0248

OR2008-08081

Dear Ms. Cartwright:

~~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# 313262.~~

The Bexar Appraisal District (the "district") received a request for all available information concerning sales of single-family residential properties in Bexar County having the 50 largest living area square footage, from January 1, 2005, through the present including the appraisal records of those properties. You state that you have released responsive documentation for two of the requested properties. You claim that the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.148 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted representative sample of information.¹

You claim that the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.148 of the Government Code. Section 552.148(a) provides that "[i]nformation relating to real property sales prices, descriptions, characteristics, and other related information received from a private entity by the comptroller or the chief appraiser of an appraisal district under

¹We assume that the "representative sample" of records submitted to this office is truly representative of the requested records as a whole. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 499 (1988), 497 (1988). This open records letter does not reach, and therefore does not authorize the withholding of, any other requested records to the extent that those records contain substantially different types of information than that submitted to this office.

Chapter 6, Tax Code, is excepted from the requirements of Section 552.021.” Gov’t Code § 552.148(a). You state that the “process of identifying which 50 accounts on the appraisal roll that meet the requestor’s criteria would in essence provide the requestor with ‘other related information’, which is excepted from disclosure under Section 552.148(a).” We disagree. We find that the exception only applies to the submitted information to the extent that it consists of “information relating to real property sales prices, descriptions, characteristics, and other related information received from a private entity.” *See id.* You do not inform us that the district is authorized to release this information to the requestor. *See id.* § 552.148(b). Therefore, we conclude that the district must withhold the submitted information under section 552.148 of the Government Code to the extent that it consists of “information relating to real property sales prices, descriptions, characteristics, and other related information received from a private entity.” To the extent that the submitted information does not consist of such information received from a private entity, the district must release it 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 file suit in Travis County within 30 calendar days. *Id.* § 552.324(b). In order to get the full benefit of such a challenge, 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).

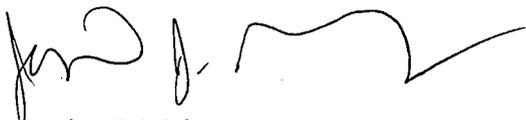
If this ruling requires the governmental body to release all or part of the requested information, the governmental body is responsible for taking the next step. Based on the statute, the attorney general expects that, upon receiving this ruling, the governmental body will either release the public records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



Jessica J. Maloney
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

JJM/jh

Ref: ID# 313262

Enc. Submitted documents

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(w/o enclosures)