



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

September 15, 2015

Mr. Joseph J. Gorfida, Jr.
Counsel for the City of Richardson
Nichols, Jackson, Dillard, Hager & Smith, LLP
1800 Ross Tower
500 North Akard Street
Dallas, Texas 75201

OR2015-19157

Dear Mr. Gorfida:

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# 579457 (PIR No. 15-520).

The City of Richardson (the "city"), which you represent, received a request for certain information pertaining to a specified citation, including radar or laser equipment used, and information pertaining to the citing officer. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.103 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Section 552.103 of the Government Code provides, in relevant part, the following:

- (a) Information is excepted from [required public disclosure] if it is information relating to litigation of a civil or criminal nature to which the state or a political subdivision is or may be a party or to which an officer or employee of the state or a political subdivision, as a consequence of the person's office or employment, is or may be a party.

(c) Information relating to litigation involving a governmental body or an officer or employee of a governmental body is excepted from disclosure under Subsection (a) only if the litigation is pending or reasonably anticipated on the date that the requestor applies to the officer for public information for access to or duplication of the information.

Gov't Code § 552.103(a), (c). A governmental body has the burden of providing relevant facts and documents to show that the section 552.103(a) exception applies in a particular situation. The test for meeting this burden is a showing that (1) litigation was pending or reasonably anticipated on the date the governmental body received the request for information, and (2) the requested information is related to that litigation. *See Univ. of Tex. Law Sch. v. Tex. Legal Found.*, 958 S.W.2d 479, 481 (Tex. App.—Austin 1997, orig. proceeding); *Heard v. Houston Post Co.*, 684 S.W.2d 210, 212 (Tex. App.—Houston [1st Dist.] 1984, writ ref'd n.r.e.); Open Records Decision No. 551 at 4 (1990). The governmental body must meet both parts of this test for information to be excepted under section 552.103(a). *See* ORD 551 at 4.

To establish litigation is reasonably anticipated, a governmental body must provide this office “concrete evidence showing that the claim that litigation may ensue is more than mere conjecture.” Open Records Decision No. 452 at 4 (1986). In the context of anticipated litigation in which the governmental body is the prospective plaintiff, the concrete evidence must at least reflect that litigation is “realistically contemplated.” *See* Open Records Decision No. 518 at 5 (1989); *see also* Attorney General Opinion MW-575 (1982) (finding that investigatory file may be withheld from disclosure if governmental body attorney determines that it should be withheld pursuant to section 552.103 and that litigation is “reasonably likely to result”). Whether litigation is reasonably anticipated must be determined on a case-by-case basis. *See* ORD 452 at 4.

You state the submitted information relates to a case the city intends to file or has filed with the city's municipal court in regard to the specified citation. Based on this representation and our review, we find that litigation was reasonably anticipated on the date the city received the request, and the information at issue pertains to the anticipated litigation. Therefore, the information at issue is generally subject to section 552.103 of the Government Code.

However, once information has been obtained by all parties to the litigation through discovery or otherwise, no section 552.103(a) interest exists with respect to that information. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 349 (1982), 320 (1982). Thus, information that has either been obtained from or provided to all parties to the pending litigation is not excepted from disclosure under section 552.103(a) and must be disclosed. Further, the applicability of section 552.103(a) ends once the litigation has been concluded. *See* Attorney General Opinion MW-575 (1982); *see also* Open Records Decision No. 350 (1982). We note the submitted information includes the specified citation. Because the citation was provided to the individual cited, the opposing party in the litigation has already seen this information.

Thus, the citation, which we have marked, may not be withheld under section 552.103 of the Government Code. Thus, with the exception of the citation, which we have marked for release, the city may withhold the submitted information under section 552.103 of the Government Code.¹

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

This ruling triggers important deadlines regarding the rights and responsibilities of the governmental body and of the requestor. For more information concerning those rights and responsibilities, please visit our website at http://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/open/orl_ruling_info.shtml, or call the Office of the Attorney General's Open Government Hotline, toll free, at (877) 673-6839. Questions concerning the allowable charges for providing public information under the Act may be directed to the Office of the Attorney General, toll free, at (888) 672-6787.

Sincerely,



Britni Fabian
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

BF/bhf

Ref: ID# 579457

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)

¹We note the information being released contains the requestor's date of birth and motor vehicle record information, to which the requestor has a right of access under section 552.023 of the Government Code. See Gov't Code § 552.023(a). If the city receives another request for this particular information from a different requestor, then the city should again seek a decision from this office.