



**KEN PAXTON**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

June 28, 2016

Ms. Mariví Gambini  
Paralegal  
City of Irving  
825 West Irving Boulevard  
Irving, Texas 75060

OR2016-14666

Dear Ms. Gambini:

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# 616423 (ORR# 16-808).

The City of Irving (the "city") received a request for several categories of information pertaining to the city's alarm management services. The city states it will release some information. Although the city takes no position as to whether the submitted information is excepted under the Act, the city informs us release of this information may implicate the proprietary interests of Public Safety Corporation ("PSC"). Accordingly, the city states, and provides documentation showing, it notified PSC of the request for information and of its right to submit arguments to this office as to why the information at issue should not be released. *See* Gov't Code § 552.305(d); *see also* Open Records Decision No. 542 (1990) (statutory predecessor to section 552.305 permits governmental body to rely on interested third party to raise and explain applicability of exception in the Act in certain circumstances). We have received comments from PSC. We have considered the submitted arguments and reviewed the submitted information.

Section 552.104(a) of the Government Code excepts from disclosure "information that, if released, would give advantage to a competitor or bidder." Gov't Code § 552.104(a). In considering whether a private third party may assert this exception, the supreme court reasoned because section 552.305(a) of the Government Code includes section 552.104 as an example of an exception that involves a third party's property interest, a private third party may invoke this exception. *Boeing Co. v. Paxton*, 466 S.W.3d 831 (Tex. 2015). The "test under section 552.104 is whether knowing another bidder's [or competitor's information] would be an advantage, not whether it would be a decisive advantage." *Id.* at 841. PSC states it has a competitor. In addition, PSC seeks to withhold the terms of the contract stating release of the information at issue would allow its competitor to "undeniably gain an

advantage in future bids by knowing exactly what information PSC includes in their [sic] proposals including the exact services provided, the fee charged by PSC for its services, the allocation of certain expenses between the [c]ity and PSC, the extent of any insurance coverage required to be maintained by PSC, and the extent of the parties [sic] respective indemnification obligations, if any.” For many years, this office concluded the terms of a contract and especially the pricing of a winning bidder are public and generally not excepted from disclosure. Gov’t Code § 552.022(a)(3) (contract involving receipt or expenditure of public funds expressly made public); Open Records Decision Nos. 541 at 8 (1990) (public has interest in knowing terms of contract with state agency), 514 (1988) (public has interest in knowing prices charged by government contractors), 494 (1988) (requiring balancing of public interest in disclosure with competitive injury to company). *See generally* Freedom of Information Act Guide & Privacy Act Overview, 219 (2000) (federal cases applying analogous Freedom of Information Act reasoning that disclosure of prices charged government is a cost of doing business with government). However, now, pursuant to *Boeing*, section 552.104 is not limited to only ongoing competitive situations, and a third party need only show release of its competitively sensitive information would give an advantage to a competitor even after a contract is executed. *Boeing*, 466 S.W.3d at 831, 839. After review of the information at issue and consideration of the arguments, we find PSC has established the release of the information at issue would give advantage to a competitor or bidder. Thus, we conclude the city may withhold the submitted information under section 552.104(a) of the Government Code.<sup>1</sup>

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](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,



Rahat Huq  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

RSH/som

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<sup>1</sup>As our ruling is dispositive, we need not address the remaining arguments against disclosure.

Ref: ID# 616423

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)

Third Party  
(w/o enclosures)