



**KEN PAXTON**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

September 8, 2016

Mr. Josh Marcum  
Assistant City Attorney  
City of Fort Worth  
1000 Throckmorton Street, Third Floor  
Fort Worth, Texas 76102

OR2016-20242

Dear Mr. Marcum:

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# 626179 (PIR No. 16-23516).

The City of Fort Worth (the "city") received a request for a specified incident report. The city states it has released some information. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.108 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code excepts from 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 claiming section 552.108(a)(1) must explain how and why the release of the requested information would interfere with law enforcement. *See id.* §§ 552.108(a)(1), .301(e)(1)(A); *see also Ex parte Pruitt*, 551 S.W.2d 706 (Tex. 1977). You state the submitted information pertains to an active criminal investigation and prosecution. Based on your representation, we conclude the release of the information at issue 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) (court delineates law enforcement interests that are present in active cases), *writ ref'd n.r.e. per curiam*, 536 S.W.2d 559 (Tex. 1976). Thus, section 552.108(a)(1) is applicable to the submitted information.

However, as you acknowledge, 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). Basic

information refers to the information held to be public in *Houston Chronicle*. See 531 S.W.2d at 186-88; Open Records Decision No. 127 (1976) (summarizing types of information considered to be basic information). Thus, with the exception of basic information the city may generally withhold the submitted information under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code.

In this instance, however, the requestor has a right of access to some of the submitted information. Section 411.089(a) of the Government Code provides that “[a] criminal justice agency is entitled to obtain from the [Texas Department of Public Safety (the “DPS”)] any criminal history record information [(“CHRI”)] maintained by the [DPS] about a person.” Gov’t Code § 411.089(a). Additionally, section 411.087(a) of the Government Code provides in part:

(a) [a] person, agency, department, political subdivision, or other entity that is authorized by this subchapter or Subchapter E-1 to obtain from the [Texas Department of Public Safety] [CHRI] maintained by the [Texas Department of Public Safety] that relates to another person is authorized to:

...

(2) obtain from any other criminal justice agency in this state [CHRI] maintained by that criminal justice agency that relates to that person.

*Id.* § 411.087(a)(2). CHRI is defined as “information collected about a person by a criminal justice agency that consists of identifiable descriptions and notations of arrests, detentions, indictments, informations, and other formal criminal charges and their dispositions.” *Id.* § 411.082(2).

The submitted documents contain CHRI. However, a criminal justice agency that receives CHRI from another criminal justice agency pursuant to section 411.087(a)(2) may only receive such information for a criminal justice purpose. See *id.* §§ 411.083(c), .087(b); see also Open Records Decision No. 655 (1997) (discussing limitations on release of CHRI). Thus, if the requestor in this instance is a “criminal justice agency,” then she is authorized to obtain CHRI from the city pursuant to section 411.087(a)(2) of the Government Code, but only for a criminal justice purpose. See Gov’t Code §§ 411.083(c), .087(a)(2).

A “criminal justice agency” is defined in part as “a federal or state agency that is engaged in the administration of criminal justice under a statute or executive order and that allocates a substantial portion of its annual budget to the administration of criminal justice.” *Id.* § 411.082(3)(A). “Administration of criminal justice” has the meaning assigned by article 60.01 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. See *id.* § 411.082(1). Article 60.01 of the Code of Criminal Procedure defines “administration of criminal justice” as the “performance of any of the following activities: detection, apprehension, detention, pretrial release, post-trial release, prosecution, adjudication, correctional supervision, or rehabilitation of an

offender. The term includes criminal identification activities and the collection, storage, and dissemination of [CHRI].” Crim. Proc. Code art. 60.01(1).

The city received the instant request for information from the United States Probation Office for the Northern District of Texas (the “probation office”). We understand the probation office is a criminal justice agency as defined by section 411.082. *See* Gov’t Code § 411.082(3)(A). We also understand the information at issue will be used for criminal justice purposes because the requestor states the probation office is conducting an investigation of the individual named in the request. Thus, the city must make CHRI available to the requestor. *See* Open Records Decision No. 451 (1986) (specific statutory right of access provisions overcome general exceptions to disclosure under the Act). Except for the basic information, the city may withhold the remaining information under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code.

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,



Kelly McWethy  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

KSM/dls

Ref: ID# 626179

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)