



**KEN PAXTON**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

October 1, 2015

Mr. John A. Haislet  
Assistant City Attorney II  
City of College Station  
Legal Department  
P.O. Box 9960  
College Station, Texas 77842

OR2015-20576

Dear Mr. Haislet:

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# 587924.

The City of College Station (the "city") received a request for information pertaining to a specified arrest involving the requestor. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.103 and 552.108 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions 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 reasonably 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 release of the submitted information would interfere with a pending investigation. Based on your representation, we conclude section 552.108(a)(1) is generally applicable to the information at issue. *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 present in active cases), *writ ref'd n.r.e. per curiam*, 536 S.W.2d 559 (Tex. 1976).

However, we note the submitted information includes a receipt for cash bond and promise to appear (the "receipt and promise"). The document reflects a copy of the receipt and promise was provided to the defendant. We find the release of the receipt and promise will

not interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime. See Gov't Code § 552.108(a)(1). Therefore, the city may not withhold the receipt and promise, which we have marked, under section 552.108.

We also note section 552.108 does not except from disclosure “basic information about an arrested person, an arrest, or a crime.” *Id.* § 552.108(c). Section 552.108(c) refers to the basic front-page offense and arrest information held to be public in *Houston Chronicle*. See 531 S.W.2d at 186-88; Open Records Decision No. 127 at 3-4 (1976) (summarizing the types of information deemed public by *Houston Chronicle*). The city must release basic offense and arrest information, even if the information does not literally appear on the front page of an offense or arrest report. Except for basic information and the receipt and promise, the city may withhold the submitted information under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code.<sup>1</sup>

Next, we address your argument under section 552.103 of the Government Code. Section 552.103 provides:

(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). The governmental body has the burden of providing relevant facts and documents to show the section 552.103(a) exception is applicable in a particular situation. The test for meeting this burden is a showing that (1) litigation is pending or reasonably anticipated on the date the governmental body received the request for information, and (2) the information at issue is related to that litigation. *Univ. of Tex. Law Sch. v. Tex. Legal Found.*, 958 S.W.2d 479, 481 (Tex. App.—Austin 1997, no pet.); *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 prongs of this test for information to be excepted under section 552.103(a).

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<sup>1</sup>As our ruling is dispositive, we need not consider your remaining argument against disclosure.

We note the purpose of section 552.103 is to enable a governmental body to protect its position in litigation by forcing parties to obtain information related to litigation through the discovery process. *See* ORD 551 at 4-5. Thus, any information obtained from or provided to all other parties in the anticipated or pending litigation is not excepted from disclosure under section 552.103(a) and must be disclosed. The receipt and promise was provided to the arrestee; thus, the receipt and promise was inevitably seen by the opposing party to the litigation. Furthermore, basic information held to be public in *Houston Chronicle* is generally not excepted from public disclosure under section 552.103 of the Government Code. Open Records Decision No. 597 (1991). Therefore, the city may not withhold any of the remaining information under section 552.103 of the Government Code.

In summary, except for basic information and the receipt and promise, which must be released, the city may withhold the submitted 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,



Nicholas A. Ybarra  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

NAY/cbz

Ref: ID# 587924

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)