



**KEN PAXTON**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

August 24, 2016

Mr. Michael Bostic  
Assistant City Attorney  
City of Dallas  
1500 Marilla Street, Room 7DN  
Dallas, Texas 75201

OR2016-19083

Dear Mr. Bostic:

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# 624195.

The City of Dallas (the "city") received a request for information related to a specified incident. You claim the requested information may be excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101 through 552.142 of the Government Code. We have considered the exceptions you claim.

We must address the city's procedural obligations under section 552.301 of the Government Code when requesting a decision from this office under the Act. Pursuant to section 552.301(e), a governmental body must submit to this office within fifteen business days of receiving an open records request (1) written comments stating the reasons why the stated exceptions apply that would allow the information to be withheld, (2) a copy of the written request for information, (3) a signed statement or sufficient evidence showing the date the governmental body received the written request, and (4) a copy of the specific information requested or representative samples, labeled to indicate which exceptions apply to which parts of the documents. *See* Gov't Code § 552.301(e). You state the city received the request for information on June 10, 2016. However, as of the date of this letter, you have not submitted for our review written comments stating the reasons why the stated exceptions apply or a copy or representative sample of the information requested. Consequently, we find the city failed to comply with section 552.301 of the Government Code.

Pursuant to section 552.302 of the Government Code, a governmental body's failure to comply with section 552.301 results in the legal presumption the requested information is public and must be released unless a compelling reason exists to withhold the information

from disclosure. *See id.* § 552.302; *Simmons v. Kuzmich*, 166 S.W.3d 342, 350 (Tex. App.—Fort Worth 2005, no pet.); *Hancock v. State Bd. of Ins.*, 797 S.W.2d 379, 381-82 (Tex. App.—Austin 1990, no writ) (governmental body must make compelling demonstration to overcome presumption of openness pursuant to statutory predecessor to section 552.302); *see also* Open Records Decision No. 630 (1994). Generally, a compelling reason to withhold information exists where some other source of law makes the information confidential or where third-party interests are at stake. Open Records Decision No. 150 at 2 (1977). Although the city raises discretionary exceptions, these exceptions protect a governmental body's interest and may be waived. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 665 at 2 n.5 (2000) (discretionary exceptions generally), 663 at 5 (1999) (untimely request for decision resulted in waiver of discretionary exceptions). Thus, the city has waived its claims under the stated discretionary exceptions.

Although the city also claims mandatory exceptions that make information confidential, because you have not submitted a copy or representative sample of the specific information requested to this office for our review, we have no basis for finding it confidential under the claimed mandatory exceptions. Thus, we have no choice but to order the city to release the requested information in accordance with section 552.302 of the Government Code. If you believe the information is confidential and may not lawfully be released, you must challenge this ruling in court pursuant to section 552.324 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,



Erin Groff  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

EMB/eb

Ref: ID# 624195

c: Requestor