



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

March 29, 2017

Ms. Heather Silver
Assistant City Attorney
City of Dallas
1500 Marilla Street, Room 7DN
Dallas, Texas 75201

OR2017-06492

Dear Ms. Silver:

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# 650680.

The City of Dallas (the "city") received a request for communications between several specified individuals during a specified time period. You state the city will withhold certain information pursuant to Open Records Decision No. 684 (2009).¹ You state the city will release some of the requested information. Although you take no position as to whether the submitted information is excepted under the Act, you state release of the submitted information may implicate the proprietary interests of PWP Landscape Architecture ("PWP"). Accordingly, you state, and provide documentation showing, you notified PWP of the request for information and of its right to submit arguments to this office as to why the submitted information 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 reviewed the submitted information.

An interested third party is allowed ten business days after the date of its receipt of the governmental body's notice under section 552.305(d) to submit its reasons, if any, as to why

¹Open Records Decision No. 684 is a previous determination to all governmental bodies authorizing them to withhold certain information without the necessity of requesting an attorney general decision. *But see Austin Bulldog v. Leffingwell*, 490 S.W.3d 240 (Tex. App.—Austin 2016, no pet.) (holding personal e-mail addresses of government officials used to conduct official government business are not e-mail addresses of "members of the public" for purposes of Gov't Code § 552.137(a)).

information relating to that party should be withheld from public disclosure. *See* Gov't Code § 552.305(d)(2)(B). As of the date of this letter, we have not received comments from PWP explaining why the submitted information should not be released. Therefore, we have no basis to conclude PWP has a protected proprietary interest in the submitted information. *See id.* § 552.110; Open Records Decision Nos. 661 at 5-6 (1999) (to prevent disclosure of commercial or financial information, party must show by specific factual evidence, not conclusory or generalized allegations, that release of requested information would cause that party substantial competitive harm), 552 at 5 (1990) (party must establish *prima facie* case that information is trade secret), 542 at 3. Accordingly, the city may not withhold the submitted information on the basis of any proprietary interest PWP may have in the information. As no exceptions to disclosure have been raised, the city must release the submitted information.

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,



Claire V. Morris Sloan
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

CVMS/som

Ref: ID# 650680

c: Requestor

Third Party