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ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

June 2, 2017

Mr. Alan T. Ozuna
Counsel for the City of Pharr
Denton Navarro Rocha Bernal Hyde & Zech, PC
701 East Harrison, Suite 100
Harlingen, Texas 78550-9165

OR2017-12054

Dear Mr. Ozuna:

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# 660202 (Ref. Nos. 2017-146, 2017-172).

The City of Pharr (the "city"), which you represent, received a request for a roster of the police officers in the city's police department (the "department"), excluding undercover officers. 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.

Initially, we note the requestor specifically excluded the identities of undercover officers from the present request. Thus, the portions of the submitted information that consist of the identities of undercover officers are not responsive to the present request. This ruling does not address the public availability of any information that is not responsive to the request, and the city is not required to release that information in response to the request.

Section 552.108(b)(1) of the Government Code excepts from disclosure the internal records and notations of law enforcement agencies and prosecutors when their release would interfere with law enforcement and crime prevention. Gov't Code § 552.108(b)(1); *see also* Open Records Decision No. 531 at 2 (1989) (quoting *Ex parte Pruitt*, 551 S.W.2d 706 (Tex. 1977)). A governmental body claiming section 552.108(b)(1) must reasonably explain how and why the release of the requested information would interfere with law enforcement. *See* Gov't Code §§ 552.108(b)(1), .301(e)(1)(A); *see also Ex parte Pruitt*, 551 S.W.2d 706 (Tex. 1977). Section 552.108(b)(1) is intended to protect "information which, if released, would permit private citizens to anticipate weaknesses in a police department, avoid

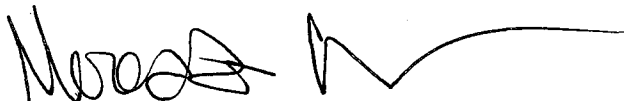
detection, jeopardize officer safety, and generally undermine police efforts to effectuate the laws of this State.” See *City of Fort Worth v. Cornyn*, 86 S.W.3d 320 at 327 (Tex. App.—Austin 2002, no pet.). This office has concluded section 552.108(b)(1) excepts from public disclosure information relating to the security or operation of a law enforcement agency. See, e.g., Open Records Decision Nos. 531 (release of detailed use of force guidelines would unduly interfere with law enforcement), 252 (1980) (section 552.108 of the Government Code is designed to protect investigative techniques and procedures used in law enforcement), 143 (1976) (disclosure of specific operations or specialized equipment directly related to investigation or detection of crime may be excepted). Section 552.108(b)(1) is not applicable, however, to generally known policies and procedures. See, e.g., ORDs 531 at 2–3 (Penal Code provisions, common law rules, and constitutional limitations on use of force not protected), 252 at 3 (governmental body failed to indicate why investigative procedures and techniques requested were any different from those commonly known).

You state the submitted responsive information, if released, would interfere with law enforcement or prosecution of crime. You state the release of the information at issue would allow criminals and others to anticipate police coverage and calculate weaknesses. Upon review, however, we find you have not demonstrated any of the submitted responsive information at issue would interfere with law enforcement or crime prevention. Accordingly, the city may not withhold any of the submitted responsive information under section 552.108(b)(1) of the Government Code. The city must release the submitted responsive 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,



Meredith L. Coffman
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

MLC/bw

Ref: ID# 660202

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)