



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

July 17, 2017

Mr. Thomas A. Gwosdz
City Attorney
City of Victoria
P.O. Box 1758
Victoria, Texas 77902-1758

OR2017-15933

Dear Mr. Gwosdz:

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# 673334.

The City of Victoria (the "city") received a request for a specified police report. 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.

We note the submitted information includes a search warrant subject to section 552.022(a)(17) of the Government Code. Section 552.022(a)(17) of the Government Code provides for required public disclosure of "information that is also contained in a public court record," unless it is "made confidential under [the Act] or other law[.]" Gov't Code § 552.022(a)(17). We have marked the search warrant that is subject to section 552.022(a)(17). Although you seek to withhold this information under section 552.108 of the Government Code, this section is a discretionary exception and does not make information confidential under the Act. *See id.* § 552.007; Open Records Decision No. 665 at 2 n.5 (2000) (discretionary exceptions generally). As such section 552.108 does not make information confidential for the purposes of section 552.022. Accordingly, this search warrant may not be withheld under section 552.108. However, we note a portion of the search warrant is subject to section 552.130, which makes information confidential under

the Act.¹ Therefore, we will address the applicability of section 552.130 to the information subject to section 552.022(a)(17).

Section 552.130 provides that information relating to a motor vehicle operator's or driver's license or permit or motor vehicle title or registration issued by an agency of this state or another state or country is excepted from public release. Gov't Code § 552.130. Upon review, we find the city must withhold the motor vehicle record information we have marked in the submitted search warrant under section 552.130 of the Government Code.

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[.]” *Id.* § 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 remaining information pertains to a pending criminal 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). Therefore, we agree section 552.108(a)(1) is applicable to the remaining information.

However, section 552.108 does not except from disclosure basic information about a crime. Gov't Code § 552.108(c). Basic information refers to the information held to be public in *Houston Chronicle*, 531 S.W.2d at 186–87. *See* Open Records Decision No. 127 at 3-4 (1976) (summarizing types of information deemed public by *Houston Chronicle*). Thus, with the exception of basic information, the city may withhold the remaining information under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code.

In summary, except for the information we have marked under section 552.130 of the Government Code, which must be withheld, the court document we have marked under section 552.022(a)(17) of the Government Code must be released. With the exception of basic information, which the city must release, the city may withhold the remaining submitted information under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code.

¹The Office of the Attorney General will raise a mandatory exception on behalf of a governmental body, but ordinarily will not raise other exceptions. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 481 (1987), 480 (1987), 470 (1987).

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,



Tim Neal
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

TN/tdw

Ref: ID# 673334

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)