



**KEN PAXTON**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

October 1, 2019

Ms. Jessica Farrias  
Administrative Support Specialist  
City of Carrollton  
1945 East Jackson  
Carrollton, Texas 75006

OR2019-27415

Dear Ms. Farrias:

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# 788749 (ORR# 16862).

The City of Carrollton (the "city") received five requests from the same requestor for five specified incident reports. The city claims some of the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under sections 552.101, 552.108, 552.130, and 552.137 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception the city claims and reviewed the submitted information.

Initially, we note the city has submitted only one of the requested incident reports. To the extent any additional information responsive to the requests existed on the date the city received the requests, we assume the city has released it. If the city has not released any such information, it must do so at this time. *See* Gov't Code §§ 552.301(a), .302; *see also* Open Records Decision No. 664 (2000) (if governmental body concludes no exceptions apply to requested information, it must release information as soon as possible).

Next, we must address the city's obligations under section 552.301 of the Government Code, which prescribes the procedures a governmental body must follow in asking this office to decide whether requested information is excepted from public disclosure. *See* Gov't Code § 552.301. 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 id.* § 552.301(e). The city received the request for information on July 15, 2019. The city does not inform us it was closed for any business days between July 15, 2019, and August 5, 2019. Accordingly, the city was required to provide the information required by section 552.301(e) by August 5, 2019. However, the envelope in which the city provided a complete copy of the request for information required by section 552.301(e) was postmarked August 21, 2019. *See id.* § 552.308(a)(1) (describing rules for calculating submission dates of documents sent via first class United States mail, common or contract carrier, or interagency mail). Accordingly, we conclude the city failed to comply with the procedural requirements mandated by section 552.301 of the Government Code.

Pursuant to section 552.302 of the Government Code, a governmental body's failure to comply with the procedural requirements of section 552.301 results in the legal presumption that the requested information is public and must be released unless there is a compelling reason to withhold the information from disclosure. *See id.* § 552.302; *Simmons v. Kuzmich*, 166 S.W.3d 342 (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). The city claims sections 552.101, 552.130, and 552.137 of the Government Code for the submitted information. Because sections 552.101, 552.130, and 552.137 can provide compelling reasons to overcome the presumption of openness, we will address the city's arguments under these exceptions against release of the submitted information. However, we find the city has failed to establish a compelling reason to address its remaining claimed exception.

Section 552.101 of the Government Code excepts from disclosure "information considered to be confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision." Gov't Code § 552.101. Section 552.101 encompasses the doctrine of common-law privacy. *Indus. Found. v. Tex. Indus. Accident Bd.*, 540 S.W.2d 668, 685 (Tex. 1976). Under the common-law right of privacy, an individual has a right to be free from the publicizing of private affairs in which the public has no legitimate concern. *Id.* at 682. The Third Court of Appeals has concluded public citizens' dates of birth are protected by common-law privacy pursuant to section 552.101. *See Paxton v. City of Dallas*, No. 03-13-00546-CV, 2015 WL 3394061, at \*3 (Tex. App.—Austin May 22, 2015, pet. denied) (mem. op.). Thus, the city must withhold the public citizen's date of birth it marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy.

Section 552.130 of the Government Code provides information relating to a motor vehicle operator's license, driver's license, motor vehicle title or registration, or personal identification document issued by an agency of this state or another state or country is excepted from public release. *See Gov't Code* § 552.130. Accordingly, the city must withhold the motor vehicle record information it marked and the additional motor vehicle record information we marked under section 552.130 of the Government Code.

Section 552.137 of the Government Code excepts from disclosure “an e-mail address of a member of the public that is provided for the purpose of communicating electronically with a governmental body” unless the member of the public consents to its release or the e-mail address is of a type specifically excluded by subsection (c). See Gov’t Code § 552.137(a)-(c). The e-mail address at issue is not excluded by subsection (c). Therefore, the city must withhold the personal e-mail address it marked under section 552.137 of the Government Code, unless the owner affirmatively consents to its public disclosure.

In summary, the city must withhold the public citizen’s date of birth it marked under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy. The city must withhold the motor vehicle record information it marked and the additional motor vehicle record information we marked under section 552.130 of the Government Code. The city must withhold the personal e-mail address it marked under section 552.137 of the Government Code, unless the owner affirmatively consents to its public disclosure. The city must release the remaining 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 <https://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/open-government/members-public/what-expect-after-ruling-issued> or call the OAG’s Open Government Hotline, toll free, at (877) 673-6839. Questions concerning the allowable charges for providing public information under the Public Information Act may be directed to the Cost Rules Administrator of the OAG, toll free, at (888) 672-6787.

Sincerely,



Emily Kunst  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

EK/mo

Ref: ID# 788749

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)