



**KEN PAXTON**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

October 29, 2019

Ms. Rebekah Wendt  
Assistant City Attorney  
City of Houston  
P.O. Box 368  
Houston, Texas 77001-0368

OR2019-30539

Dear Ms. Wendt:

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# 793779 (GC No. 26108).

The City of Houston (the "city") received a request for all communications between the offices of three named city council members and nine named individuals during a specified time period.<sup>1</sup> You state the city will release some information to the requestor. Although you do not take a position as to whether the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under the Act, you state you notified Ea Architects ("Ea") of the city's receipt of the request for information and of its right to submit arguments to this office as to why the requested information should not be released. *See* Gov't Code § 552.305(d); *see also* Open Records Decision No. 542 at 3 (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.

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<sup>1</sup> We note the city sought and received clarification of the information requested. *See* Gov't Code § 552.222 (providing if request for information is unclear, governmental body may ask requestor to clarify request); *see also* *City of Dallas v. Abbott*, 304 S.W.3d 380, 387 (Tex. 2010) (holding when governmental entity, acting in good faith, requests clarification of unclear or overbroad request for public information, ten-business-day period to request attorney general opinion is measured from date request is clarified or narrowed).

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 requested information relating to it should be withheld from disclosure. *See* Gov't Code § 552.305(d)(2)(B). As of the date of this letter, Ea has not submitted to this office any reasons explaining why the requested information should not be released. Accordingly, we have no basis for concluding the submitted information constitutes proprietary information of Ea, and the city may not withhold any portion of it on that basis. *See* 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. 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 <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,



Tim Neal  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

TN/gw

Ref: ID# 793779

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)

Third Party  
(w/o enclosures)