



**KEN PAXTON**  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

February 10, 2020

Ms. Sherri Russell  
Office of the City Attorney  
City of Lake Jackson  
5B Oak Drive  
Lake Jackson, Texas 77566-5289

OR2020-03851

Dear Ms. Russell:

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# 818784 (PIR No. W003894-010320).

The City of Lake Jackson (the "city") received a request for several categories of information pertaining to a specified incident, including physical evidence. You state the city has released some information. You also state the city does not maintain information responsive to portions of the request.<sup>1</sup> You claim some of the requested information is not subject to the Act. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.108 of the Government Code. We have considered your arguments and reviewed the submitted information.

Initially, we note the requestor seeks the production of physical evidence related to the specified incident. The Act applies to "public information," which is defined in section 552.002 of the Government Code. Section 552.002 provides, in pertinent part, the following:

- (a) In this chapter, "public information" means information that is written, produced, collected, assembled, or maintained under a law or ordinance or in connection with the transaction of official business:

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<sup>1</sup> The Act does not require a governmental body that receives a request for information to create information that did not exist when the request was received. See *Econ. Opportunities Dev. Corp. v. Bustamante*, 562 S.W.2d 266 (Tex. Civ. App.—San Antonio 1978, writ dismissed); Open Records Decision Nos. 605 at 2 (1992), 563 at 8 (1990), 555 at 1-2 (1990).

- (1) by a governmental body;
- (2) for a governmental body and the governmental body:
  - (A) owns the information;
  - (B) has a right of access to the information; or
  - (C) spends or contributes public money for the purpose of writing, producing, collecting, assembling, or maintaining the information; or
- (3) by an individual officer or employee of a governmental body in the officer's or employee's official capacity and the information pertains to official business of the governmental body.

Gov't Code § 552.002(a). This office has ruled tangible physical items are not "information," as that term is contemplated under the Act. *See* Open Records Decision No. 581 (1990). Thus, tangible items are not public information for purposes of section 552.002 of the Government Code, and the Act does not require the city to make tangible items available to the requestor. *See* Gov't Code § 552.021.

Section 552.108(a)(2) of the Government Code excepts from disclosure information concerning an investigation that did not result in conviction or deferred adjudication. Gov't Code § 552.108(a)(2). A governmental body claiming section 552.108(a)(2) must demonstrate the requested information relates to a criminal investigation that has concluded in a final result other than a conviction or deferred adjudication. *See id.* § 552.301(e)(1)(A); Open Records Decision No. 434 (1986). You state the submitted information pertains to a criminal investigation that did not result in conviction or deferred adjudication. Based on this representation, we agree section 552.108(a)(2) is applicable to the submitted information.

Section 552.108 does not except from disclosure "basic information about an arrested person, an arrest, or a crime." Gov't Code § 552.108(c). Section 552.108(c) refers to the basic "front-page" information held to be public in *Houston Chronicle Publishing Co. v. City of Houston*, 531 S.W.2d 177 (Tex. Civ. App.—Houston [14th Dist.] 1975), *writ ref'd n.r.e. per curiam*, 536 S.W.2d 559 (Tex. 1976). *See also* Open Records Decision No. 127 (1976) (summarizing types of information considered to be basic information). Accordingly, with the exception of basic information, which you state has been released, the city may withhold the submitted information under section 552.108(a)(2) of the Government Code.

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,



Kieran Hillis  
Assistant Attorney General  
Open Records Division

KH/be

Ref: ID# 818784

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor  
(w/o enclosures)