



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

August 28, 2020

Ms. Julie P. Doshier
Contract Attorney for the City of Highland Village
Nichols, Jackson, Dillard, Hager & Smith, LLP
500 North Akard Street, Suite 1800
Dallas, Texas 75201

OR2020-21722

Dear Ms. Doshier:

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# 847901 (Ref. No. 2020-234-117045).

The Highland Village Police Department (the "department"), which you represent, received a request for a specified report. You state you have released some information to the requestor. 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 department has redacted portions of the submitted information. You state you have redacted certain motor vehicle record information under section 552.130(c) of the Government Code and dates of birth pursuant to Open Records Letter No. 2016-21546 (2016).¹ However, you do not assert, nor does our review of the records indicate, you have been authorized to withhold the remaining redacted information without seeking a ruling from this office. *See* Gov't Code § 552.301(a); Open Records Decision No. 673 (2001). Therefore, information must be submitted in a manner that enables this office to determine whether the information comes within the scope of an exception to disclosure. In this instance, we can discern the nature of the redacted information; thus,

¹ Section 552.130(c) of the Government Code allows a governmental body to redact the information described in subsection 552.130(a) without the necessity of seeking a decision from the attorney general. *See* Gov't Code § 552.130(c). If a governmental body redacts such information, it must notify the requestor in accordance with section 552.130(e). *See id.* § 552.130(d), (e). Open Records Letter No. 2016-21546 authorizes the department to withhold the dates of birth of public citizens under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy without requesting a decision from this office.

being deprived of this information does not inhibit our ability to make a ruling. In the future, however, the department should refrain from redacting any information that it is not authorized to withhold in seeking an open records ruling. Failure to do so may result in the presumption the redacted information is public. *See* Gov't Code § 552.302.

Section 552.108(a) 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: (1) release of the information would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime.” Gov't Code § 552.108(a)(1). Generally, 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 information you have indicated relates to an ongoing investigation, and release of that information would interfere with the investigation and prosecution of the case. Based upon this 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). Thus, section 552.108(a)(1) is applicable to the information at issue. Therefore, you may withhold the information you have indicated under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code.

As noted above, you state you have redacted certain motor vehicle record information under section 552.130(c) of the Government Code. 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 department must withhold the motor vehicle record information you have marked and the additional motor vehicle record information we have marked under section 552.130 of the Government Code.

In summary, the department may withhold the information you have indicated under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code. The department must withhold the motor vehicle record information you have marked and the additional motor vehicle record information we have marked under section 552.130 of the Government Code. The department 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,

Meredith L. Coffman
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

MLC/be

Ref: ID# 847901

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)