



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

November 30, 2020

Mr. Jeffrey W. Giles
Assistant City Attorney
City of Houston
P.O. Box 368
Houston, Texas 77001-0368

OR2020-29619

Dear Mr. Hays and Mr. Giles:

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# 855866 (GC Nos. 26938, 26939, 26941, and 26986).

The City of Houston (the "city") received four requests from different requestors for the bid tabulation pertaining to a specified bid solicitation. You claim the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.104 of the Government Code. Additionally, you state release of the information at issue may implicate the proprietary interests of certain third parties. Accordingly, you state, and provide documentation demonstrating, the city notified these interested third parties of the request for information and of their right to submit arguments to this office as to why the submitted information should not be released. *See* Gov't Code § 552.305(d); *see also* Open Records Decision No. 542 (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 considered the exception you claim and reviewed the submitted information.

Section 552.104(a) of the Government Code excepts from disclosure information that a governmental body demonstrates, if released, would "harm its interests by providing an advantage to a competitor or bidder in a particular ongoing competitive situation or in a particular competitive situation where the governmental body establishes the situation at issue is set to reoccur or there is a specific and demonstrable intent to enter into the competitive situation again in the future." Gov't Code § 552.104(a). The "test under section 552.104 is whether knowing another bidder's [or competitor's information] would be an advantage, not whether it would be a decisive advantage." *Boeing Co. v. Paxton*, 466 S.W.3d 831, 841 (Tex. 2015). After review of the information at issue and consideration

of the arguments, we find you have established the release of the information at issue would harm the city's interests by providing an advantage to a competitor or bidder in a particular ongoing competitive situation. Accordingly, we conclude the city may withhold the submitted information under section 552.104(a) 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,

Blake Brennan
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

BBX/mo

Ref: ID# 855866

Enc. Submitted documents

c: 4 Requestors
(w/o enclosures)

c: 6 Third Parties
(w/o enclosures)