



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

August 23, 2022

Ms. Charla Thomas
Assistant City Attorney
City of Temple
2 North Main Street, Suite 308
Temple, Texas 76501

OR2022-25378

Dear Ms. Thomas:

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# 965287 (Ref. No. 22-1413).

The City of Temple (the "city") received a request for twelve categories of information pertaining to a specified project. Although you take no position regarding whether the submitted information is excepted from disclosure, you state release of the information at issue may implicate the proprietary interests of Alamo Architects; Datum Engineers; KPA Engineers; and Meers Engineering, Inc.¹ 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 reviewed the submitted information.

Initially, we note 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 information relating to that party should be withheld from public disclosure. *See* Gov't Code § 552.305(d)(2)(B). As of the date of this letter, we have not received comments from any of the third parties explaining why the information at issue should not be released. Thus, we have no basis to conclude any of the third parties have a protected proprietary interest in the information at issue. *See, e.g., id.* § 552.110 (requiring

¹ We note, in a letter dated August 1, 2022, we asked the city to provide additional information pursuant to section 552.303 of the Government Code. *See* Gov't Code § 552.303(c)-(d) (if attorney general determines that information in addition to that required by section 552.301 is necessary to render decision, written notice of that fact shall be given to governmental body and requestor, and governmental body shall submit necessary additional information to attorney general not later than seventh calendar day after date of receipt of notice). In response, the city informed us it would not submit additional comments.

the provision of specific factual evidence demonstrating the applicability of the exception). Therefore, the city may not withhold any portion of the submitted information on the basis of any proprietary interest the third parties may have in it.

Section 552.136(b) of the Government Code provides, “[n]otwithstanding any other provision of [the Act], a credit card, debit card, charge card, or access device number that is collected, assembled, or maintained by or for a government body is confidential.”² *Id.* § 552.136(b); *see id.* § 552.136(a) (defining “access device”). Accordingly, the city must withhold all bank account, routing, and credit card numbers within the submitted information under section 552.136 of the Government Code.

We note some of the remaining information appears to be protected by copyright. A custodian of public records must comply with the copyright law and is not required to furnish copies of records that are copyrighted. Open Records Decision No. 180 at 3 (1977). A governmental body must allow inspection of copyrighted materials unless an exception applies to the information. *Id.*; *see* Open Records Decision No. 109 (1975). If a member of the public wishes to make copies of copyrighted materials, the person must do so unassisted by the governmental body. In making copies, the member of the public assumes the duty of compliance with the copyright law and the risk of a copyright infringement suit.

In summary, the city must withhold all bank account, routing, and credit card numbers within the submitted information under section 552.136 of the Government Code. The city must release the remaining information; however, any information subject to copyright may only be released in accordance with copyright law.

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

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² The Office of the Attorney General will raise a mandatory exception on behalf of a governmental body, but ordinarily will not raise other exceptions. *See* Open Records Decision Nos. 481 (1987), 480 (1987), 470 (1987).

Ref: ID# 965287

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)

c: 4 Third Parties
(w/o enclosures)