



KEN PAXTON
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

December 12, 2022

Ms. Esther Y. Pena
Deputy City Attorney
City of Mission
1201 East 8th Street
Mission, Texas 78572

OR2022-38448

Dear Ms. Pena:

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# 989198 (ORR# 22-0826).

The City of Mission (the “city”) received a request for report number 22-37808. The city claims the submitted information is excepted from disclosure under section 552.101 and 552.108 of the Government Code. We have considered the exception the city claims and reviewed the submitted information.

Section 552.108(a)(1) 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 . . . release of the information would interfere with the detection, investigation, or prosecution of crime[.]” Gov’t Code § 552.108(a)(1). 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). The city states the submitted information pertains to an active criminal investigation or prosecution. Based on 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 submitted information.

However, we note 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). Basic information refers to the information held to be public in *Houston Chronicle*. See 531 S.W.2d at 186-88; Open Records Decision No. 127 (1976) (summarizing types of information considered to be basic information). We note basic information includes, among other items, the identity of the complainant. See ORD 127 at 3-4. Thus, with the exception of the basic information, the city may withhold the submitted information under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code.

We note portions of the basic information are subject to section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy. Section 552.101 of the Government Code excepts “information considered to be confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision.” Gov't Code § 552.101. Section 552.101 encompasses the doctrine of common-law privacy, which protects information that is (1) highly intimate or embarrassing, the publication of which would be highly objectionable to a reasonable person, and (2) not of legitimate concern to the public. *Indus. Found. v. Tex. Indus. Accident Bd.*, 540 S.W.2d 668, 685 (Tex. 1976). To demonstrate the applicability of common-law privacy, both prongs of this test must be satisfied. *Id.* at 681-82. Types of information considered intimate and embarrassing by the Texas Supreme Court are delineated in *Industrial Foundation*. *Id.* at 683. In Open Records Decision No. 393 (1983), this office concluded information that either identifies or tends to identify a victim of sexual assault or other sex-related offense must be withheld under common-law privacy. ORD 393 at 2; see Open Records Decision No. 339 (1982); see also *Morales v. Ellen*, 840 S.W.2d at 519 (Tex. App.—El Paso 1992, writ denied) (identity of witnesses to and victims of sexual harassment was highly intimate or embarrassing information and public did not have a legitimate interest in such information). Upon review, we find the basic information includes identifying information of a victim of sexual assault. Accordingly, the city must withhold the identity of the victim of sexual assault under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy.

In summary, with the exception of the basic information, the city may withhold the submitted information under section 552.108(a)(1) of the Government Code. In releasing the basic information, the city must withhold the identity of the victim of sexual assault under section 552.101 of the Government Code in conjunction with common-law privacy.

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,

Kimbell Kesling
Assistant Attorney General
Open Records Division

KK/pt

Ref: ID# 989198

Enc. Submitted documents

c: Requestor
(w/o enclosures)