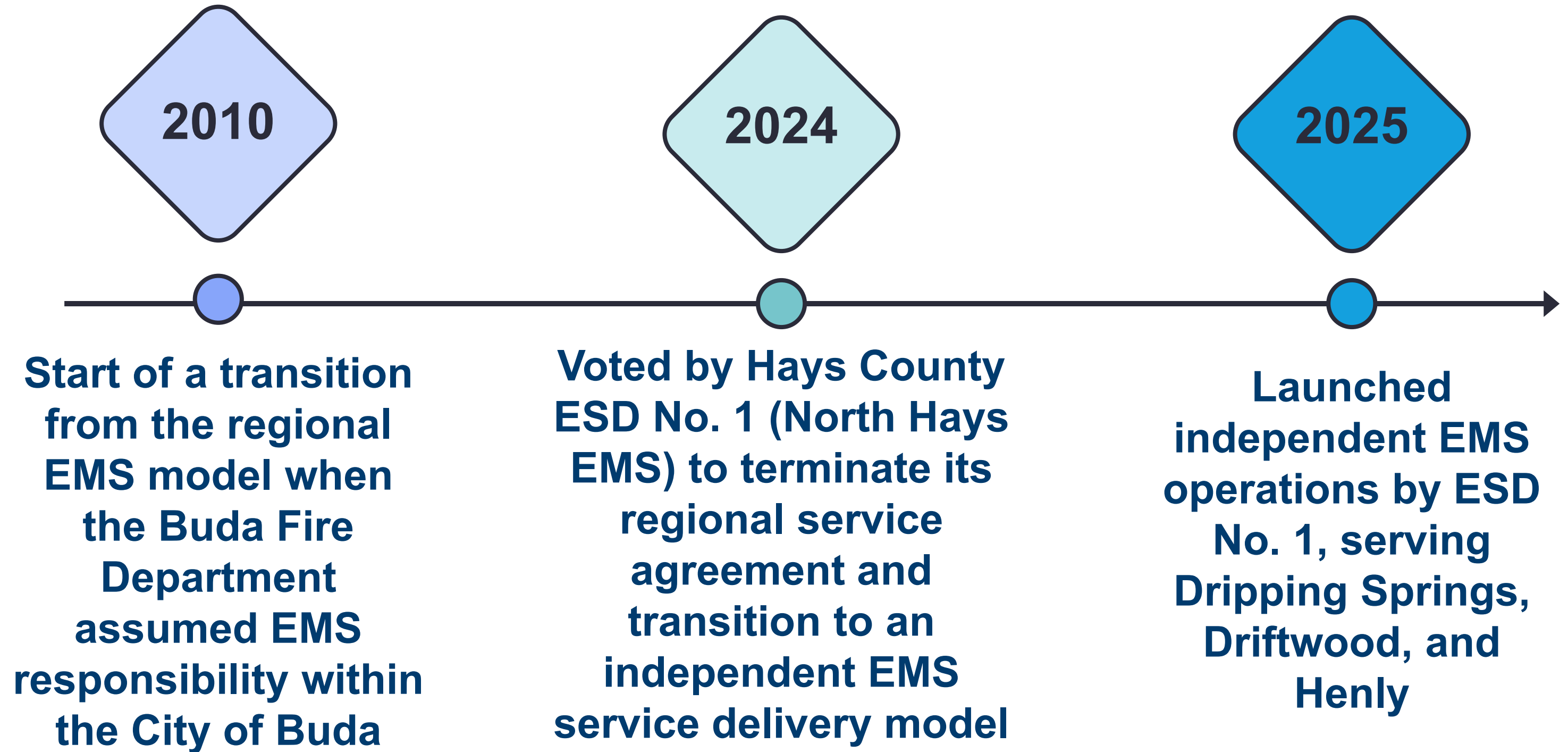




EMS Delivery in San Marcos, Texas

April 7, 2026

Background



Result – Contributed to a broader shift toward district-based EMS service delivery across Hays County

Hays County ESD No. 9 - Establish an Independent EMS Service Model, with a Soft Rollout Beginning April 2026



System changes and community growth prompted San Marcos to evaluate future EMS service delivery



- Increased service demand driven by rapid population growth and rising call volumes within the San Marcos core service area, prompting further evaluation by the City
- Changed the financial structure of the system as partner agencies transitioned to independent EMS service models
- Initiated an EMS Feasibility Study in 2025 to evaluate future EMS service delivery options, with findings presented by Matrix Consulting Group in January 2026



January 20, 2026 Council Direction: Analyze Potential Standalone City EMS Department

- Directed staff to provide additional analysis following the Matrix Consulting Group presentation and subsequent discussion
- Outlined priority considerations by Council for a potential standalone City Emergency Medical Services (EMS) department
- Included evaluation of hiring and transition practices, labor protection options, quality of care and patient outcomes, and an implementation timeline
- Initiated formation of a transition team to further evaluate and analyze these considerations



Transition Team

- City Manager Stephanie Reyes
- Assistant City Manager Lonzo Anderson
- Fire Chief Les Stephens
- Finance Director John Locke
- Human Resource Director Lindsey Cox
- City Attorney Sam Aguirre
- San Marcos/Hays County EMS Chief Jill Rosales



Labor Framework

On February 4, staff met with the leadership of the SMHCEMS Association as a courtesy to understand further labor insight related to employee protections under a standalone City EMS Department

01

Undertook a comprehensive review of applicable state laws governing labor representation and employment structures for municipal EMS, including consultation with external legal counsel

02

Included analysis of Chapters 174, 143, 617, and 142 of the Texas Government Code

03

Identify all legally permissible frameworks for EMS association and representation

04

Ensure compliance with state law

05

Support workforce stability and clearly defined employment protections

sanmarcostx.gov

EMS Employees Become City Employees



EMS clinicians who apply, qualify, and hired would become City municipal employees.

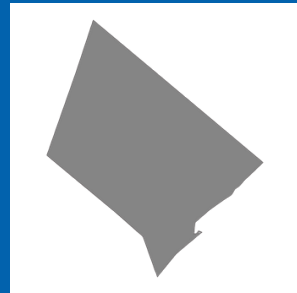
Employment Governed By:

- City personnel policies
- City pay plans and benefits
- City disciplinary and grievance procedures



Collective Bargaining

Texas Local Government **Code Chapter 174**



LOCAL

- Authorizes collective bargaining only for firefighters and police officers
- EMS personnel are not included unless classified under a fire department



STATE

Limitations

- A city cannot extend Chapter 174 rights to EMS personnel by ordinance, City Council action, public referendum, or local policy



LOCAL

Implication

- Standalone municipal EMS employees would not be eligible for Chapter 174 collective bargaining

Civil Service – Texas Local Government Code

Chapter 143 (Subchapter K)



SEC. 143.401 APPLICABILITY



- Municipality with population of 460,000 or more
- City Manager form of government
- EMS personnel in a municipal department other than fire

ASSESSMENT



- Criteria not met

IMPLICATION



- EMS personnel would not receive civil service protections under this mechanism

Collective Bargaining and Strikes

Texas Government Code Chapter 617



- Prohibits public employees from striking or work stoppages
- Applies to all public employees

CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLATION:

- Forfeiture of civil service rights, reemployment rights

IMPLICATION:

- Did not identify any additional employee protections provisions

Voluntary Associations – Texas Local Government **Code Chapter 142**



Permitted Activities

- Formation of employee associations
- Presentation of grievances
- Communication on wages and working conditions



Limitations

- Does NOT authorize binding collective bargaining agreements
- Does NOT require the City to negotiate



Population Applicability (EMS-Specific Provisions)

- Municipality population of 460,000 or more
- City Manager form of government
- EMS personnel in a department other than fire



Implication

- EMS personnel would not receive protections under this mechanism

Hiring Transition

Establish a structured hiring transition to providing EMS services under the City framework



Recruit leadership first to guide operational design and workforce transition



Provide a clear pathway for existing San Marcos–Hays County EMS personnel to apply



Maintain operational continuity while building a sustainable City-run EMS department




Ensure the transition aligns with City organizational structure, policies, and compensation framework



This hiring strategy prioritizes speed, workforce stability, and organizational alignment as the City stands up EMS as a third public safety service

Priority Step: Hire EMS Chief to Lead the Transition



Responsibilities of the EMS Chief During Transition:



April 2026

Recruitment Opens

→
Participate directly in clinician hiring and workforce selection



May 2026

Candidate Screening & Panel Interviews

→
Assist with department structure and operational planning



June 2026

Target Start Date For EMS Chief

→
Build integration between Fire, Police, and EMS operations

Hiring the Chief early is critical to establish leadership credibility, guide hiring decisions, and ensure operational readiness.

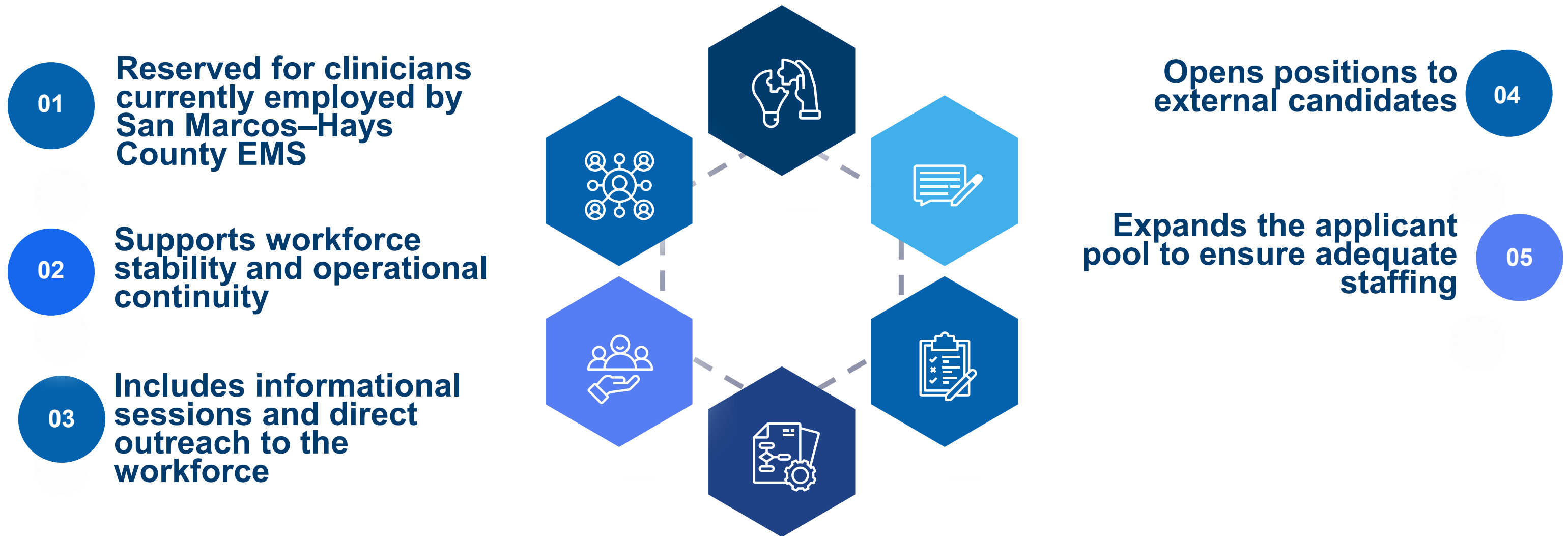
SMHCEMS Chief launching a series of professional development opportunities (resume writing, interview skills, personal finance, etc.)

Hiring Transition

Following the Chief's hiring, the City will begin clinician recruitment with a two-Phase Application Approach

Internal Priority Window (June 15 – June 26)

External Recruitment Window (June 27 – July 11)



This approach balances continuity of care for the community while allowing the City to build a high-quality EMS workforce.

Transition Plan: City is carefully evaluating the EMS Workforce Model



01

- Review of current San Marcos Hays County EMS compensation structures
- Alignment with City of San Marcos pay philosophy and pay plans

02

- Placement of the EMS Department within the City's operational and HR framework
- Alignment with City policies, benefits, and career progression structures

03

- Maintain competitiveness to recruit and retain qualified clinicians
- Ensure equitable treatment across City departments

The City is committed to building EMS as a sustainable third public safety service while maintaining fairness and consistency within the broader City workforce.

Continuity of Care EMS Transition

- **Transitioning to a City-operated EMS service will not disrupt patient care, medical oversight, or clinical standards**
- **Same Medical Director remains in place**
- **Same Clinical Operating Guidelines (COGs) remain in effect**
- **Same credentialed clinicians continue providing care**
- **Same Quality Assurance / Quality Improvement (QA/QI) framework**
- **No interruption of emergency response or clinical oversight**
- **The structure changes the clinical system does not**





San Marcos EMS operates under delegated physician authority

Reassurance Point

Patients will continue receiving physician-directed prehospital care exactly as they do today.

- ✔ **Medical Director retains final authority over credentialing**
- ✔ **Clinical Operating Guidelines remain approved by the Medical Director**
- ✔ **Online Medical Control (OLMC) remains available for atypical or complex cases**
- ✔ **Direct physician consultation required when outside protocol**
- ✔ **All physician direction documented in patient care records**

Operates within a formalized Quality Assurance/Quality Improvement structure



Reassurance Point

The transition does not weaken oversight, it retains the same performance review system.



- 30% of electronic Patient Care Report (ePCR) reviewed



- Performance monitored against established protocol standards



- Clinical Event Reviews conducted for suboptimal care events

- Clinical Performance Reviews convened for significant concerns

- Confidential, structured, improvement-focused process

Every Clinician must be credentialed by the Medical Director to practice

- Credentialing is separate from state licensure
- Skills assessments and written exams required.
- Oral interview with Medical Director required
- Annual re-credentialing process
- Advanced skill maintenance requirements

Critical Assurance:

- Current clinicians remain credentialed under the same Medical Director using the same standards.
- No dilution. No reset. No lapse.





The Transition to a Municipal EMS Service

- **Transition existing, experienced workforce**
- **Maintains the same operational crews**
- **Maintains the same training standards**
- **Maintains the same physician oversight**
- **Maintains the same response model**

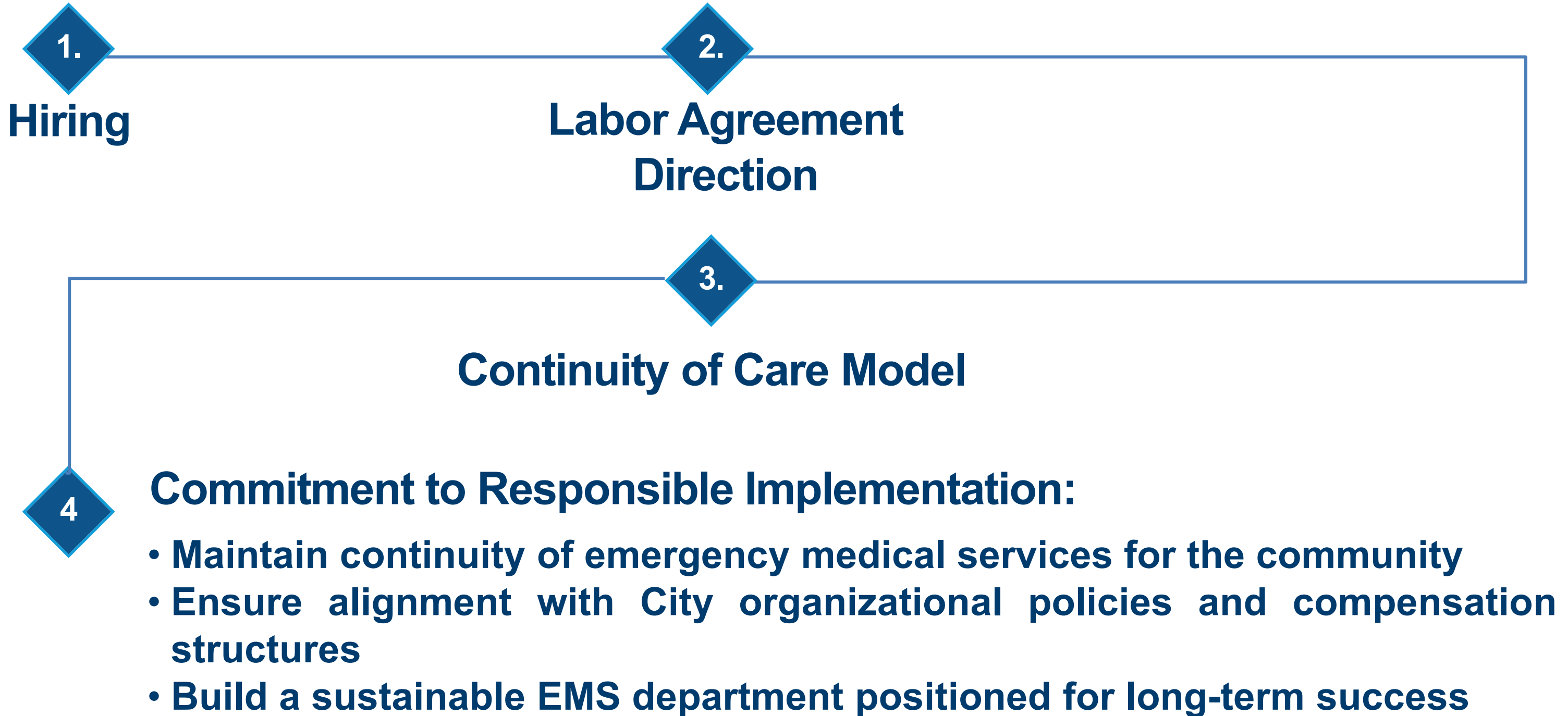
Important Clarification:

- **Labor governance structure does not change clinical credentialing, physician oversight, or patient care delivery standards.**



Next Steps

As the City moves forward with establishing EMS as a third municipal public safety service, several key milestones are approaching that staff is seeking direction.



City staff will continue to keep City Council informed as key hiring and transition milestones are reached.



Council Direction Requested

- **Continue formation of a City stand-alone EMS Department?**
 - **Proceed with hiring of Chief for City stand-alone EMS Department**



Questions and Discussion