



CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP

CITY OF FAIR OAKS RANCH, TEXAS

AGENDA TOPIC: Interlocal Agreement with Bexar County Emergency Services District No. 4 for EMS Transport Services

DATE: February 6, 2025

DEPARTMENT: Administration

PRESENTED BY: Scott M. Huizenga, ICMA-CM, City Manager

INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND:

The City must secure a new ambulance and emergency medical transport provider following Acadian Ambulance Service's decision not to renew its contract, which expires on April 30, 2025. This follows Acadian's loss of its contract with Bexar County, which significantly reduced its regional service area. The City was first made aware of this possibility in late November, and the City received a formal notice of termination from Acadian on January 22, 2025 (although the letter was erroneously dated January 10, 2024).

To prevent service disruptions and ensure continued high-quality emergency medical response, the City has negotiated a short-term Interlocal Agreement (ILA) with Bexar County Emergency Services District No. 4 (ESD4). This agreement transfers ambulance transport services from Acadian to ESD4 while maintaining the same financial terms (\$6,125/month) as the current contract.

The ILA will take effect on March 1, 2025, as proposed, aligning with Acadian's early transition request and allowing for an operational handoff. This temporary seven-month agreement (March 1 – September 30, 2025) provides flexibility for the City to evaluate long-term EMS service options. The City Council is expected to consider the ILA for approval at its February 20, 2025, Regular Meeting, following consideration by the ESD4 Board of Directors on February 17, 2025.

Last year, the City undertook a comprehensive Fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) study to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of its contracted services. The study confirmed that both Bexar County Emergency Services District No. 4 (ESD4) and the City's ambulance transport provider delivered professional and essential services at a reasonable cost. Community feedback reinforced these findings, with over 80% of residents expressing favorable impressions of both the ESD and the ambulance provider.

In 2023, ESD4 responded to over 500 emergency calls, the majority of which were medical-related. As the City works to renew its fire and ambulance service contracts, Acadian's decision not to renew its contract creates an urgent need for a new EMS transport provider.

Following recent discussions, ESD4 has proposed an interlocal agreement (ILA) to assume ambulance transport services. ESD4 has developed paramedic and transport capabilities, making it well-positioned to provide EMS transport services within Fair Oaks Ranch. The ILA ensures that residents and visitors continue receiving timely, high-quality emergency medical care. ESD4

already responds to each emergency call in the City under the existing ILA for fire and first response EMS services.

The newly drafted ILA is substantially similar to the existing agreement with ESD4, with the primary substantive change being that ESD4, rather than Acadian, will now handle ambulance transport services. Key provisions of the ILA include the following.

- **Service Coverage & Standards:** ESD4 will provide 24/7 EMS transport services within the City, maintaining response times aligned with its operational standards for the district.
- **Operational Oversight:** The Fair Oaks Ranch City Manager or designee will serve as the primary liaison with ESD4 to ensure coordination and issue resolution.
- **Financial Terms:** The City will compensate ESD4 at a rate of \$6,125 per month for these services. This is the same rate that the City currently pays to Acadian.
- **Term & Flexibility:** The agreement is structured as a seven-month contract (March 1, 2025 – September 30, 2025), allowing the City to evaluate service performance before making a long-term commitment. Either party may terminate the agreement with 60 days' notice.
- **Equipment & Liability:** ESD4 will provide, maintain, and ensure all ambulances and EMS equipment, while the City will not hold ownership interest in any equipment.

The current agreement with Acadian expires on April 30, 2025, while the current fire and first response agreement with ESD4 expires on September 30, 2025. Acadian has indicated that it would prefer to be relieved of service sooner rather than later due to its revised coverage within Bexar County. This proposal would align the expiration of the two agreements as the City continues to negotiate a new long-term agreement with ESD4.

The ESD4 Board of Directors is expected to discuss the proposed ILA at its meeting on February 3 and consider the ILA for approval at its February 17 meeting. Staff will present the ILA for City Council consideration at the February 20, 2025, Regular Council Meeting.

POLICY ANALYSIS/BENEFIT(S) TO CITIZENS:

- Ensures uninterrupted EMS transport services following Acadian's contract expiration.
- Leverages ESD4's expanding paramedic and transport capabilities to maintain continuity of care.
- Improves coordination and eliminates jurisdictional confusion by consolidating EMS response under ESD4.
- Maintains cost-effective EMS coverage while allowing flexibility for future decisions.

This agreement aligns with Priorities 4.2 and 4.3 of the Strategic Action Plan, which focus on developing long-term strategies for Fire and EMS services.

LONGTERM FINANCIAL & BUDGETARY IMPACT:

The proposed \$6,125 monthly payment to ESD4 is a budgeted expense for FY 2024-25. The payment is identical to the prorated portion of the expiring agreement with Acadian.