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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The City of Houston public safety mission was served by separate and distinct public safety systems. PRC (hereinafter referred to as Northrop Grumman) installed the system used for police dispatching in 1987. The Fire Department dispatch and records management systems were developed in-house in 1985. The systems operated by these departments reached the end of their operations and sustainment life, and the City of Houston began to combine the public safety call taking and dispatching operations into a single facility. In September 2000, the City Council approved a lease/purchase agreement formalizing the creation of the Houston Emergency Center (HEC) at 5320 North Shepard. This facility housed the personnel and some, but not all, of the public safety system that supported the Houston Police Department (HPD), Houston Fire Department (HFD), and Emergency Medical Service (EMS) operations.

Northrop Grumman was contracted to upgrade the existing Police dispatch system and to expand the system to support integrated Fire/EMS dispatch and records management. The City of Houston also created a new organization, called the HEC, [REDACTED]

During the acceptance test period and since its acceptance, the public safety data system encountered technical problems that resulted in several system outages. Outages means the data system is unavailable to a majority of call takers and dispatchers. These outages led to concerns by the City of Houston and the general public on the reliability and performance of the upgraded system.

The MITRE Corporation was requested to conduct an end-to-end performance and process analysis of the public safety data system located at the HEC to address the following questions:

- Does the system perform in accordance with the agreement established between the City of Houston and Northrop Grumman?
- How can the system performance be improved?
- What processes can be implemented to improve performance?
- How does the system design and operations compare to other cities and counties with consolidated operations?

1.2 Houston Departments Roles

Several City of Houston departments, other organizations, and contractors operate and maintain the public safety system. The City of Houston departments include the HPD, HFD and ITD as well as the HEC organization. The other organizations include Greater Harris County 9-1-1 Emergency Network. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The description of the systems that the City of Houston, other organizations, and contractors operate, manage, or maintain are described in Section 3-2.

