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Venice Aviation Society, Inc. (VASI)

Venice Municipal Airport Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

History & General Information

The City of Venice owns and operates the Venice Municipal Airport (KVNC), several miles south of Venice's central business district. Venice Airport is a General Aviation, Federally Obligated Airport, and part of the National Aviation System. The airport began operations as an Army Air Force Base in World War II. The city acquired the airport through federal land transfer deeds following the war. In 1947, the War Assets Administrator (later the General Services Administration) deeded the City's airport land pursuant to the Surplus Property Act of 1944. A Federally Obligated Airport, such as Venice, has incurred specific responsibilities, requirements, limitations, and restrictions by accepting Federal assistance in grants or conveyance of Federal property for airport purposes. These deeds of transfer or conveyance imposed these restrictions, limitations, and requirements on the city in assuming title to the Airport. These deed restrictions go with the land in perpetuity.

General aviation encompasses non-airline aviation, including business and corporate aircraft, privately owned aircraft, and various aviation businesses such as charter services, sightseeing operations, aircraft rentals, and flight training. The airport serves the general aviation needs of the local area by providing business-related flying, police, fire, and rescue services, humanitarian aid, recreational flying, flight training, medical evacuation, charity flights (such as Angel Flight), U.S. Coast Guard, and other aviation-related activities. Approximately twelve businesses currently operate from the Venice Municipal Airport. The airport also manages over 400 aeronautical and non-aeronautical leases.

The airport is open to the public and visiting aircraft. However, there are no commercial airline operations at the Venice Municipal Airport. There are over 200 aircraft based at the airport. Businesses operating from the airport include a fixed-base operator, a flight training school, an aircraft and avionics maintenance facility, a restaurant, a missionary support operation, and the Sarasota County Sheriff's Aviation Unit. Recent traffic data indicate that there are over 95,000 take-offs and landings annually. The airport is open for day and night aviation operations, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The airport administration office is open to the public from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Skyport Air Center, the airport's fixed-base operator, is open seven days a week. For more information, please contact Skyport at 941-485-1799.

The Venice City Archives, located in the Historic Triangle Inn, have extensive records on the history of the Venice Army Air Force Base. The City of Venice's Airport Department website also includes a short section titled "FAQs about the History of the Venice Airport."

What is the City's role in airport operations?

The city owns, operates, and maintains the Venice Municipal Airport as a Federally Obligated Airport in accordance with original deed restrictions, various Federal Grant Obligations (copies of the documents are available for review at the Airport Administration Office), and Florida State Regulations. The city is responsible for the airport's safe and efficient operation and maintenance. The town, per FAA Regulations and Circulars, provides procedures for aircraft operations on the ground. The FAA exclusively regulates aircraft operations in the air. The city is also responsible for physical security at the airport and limits access to authorized airport users, tenants, and their guests. An Airport Director and his staff manage the airport. The Airport Director reports to the City Manager of Venice.

The Venice Municipal Airport is an enterprise fund. Operating and capital budgets are user-funded through land and hangar leases, fuel sale flowage fees, and leasing of airport land, facilities, and hangars to commercial aviation companies and individual aircraft owners. Neither City General Funds nor taxpayer property tax monies support the Airport. Substantial capital expenditures at the airport are primarily from federal grant funds, issued by the FAA for eligible airfield improvements and maintenance projects. These grants are from the Airport and Airway Trust Fund. These grants are primarily user-funded through taxes levied on aviation fuels, passenger tickets, the air transportation of goods, and the use of civil aircraft. State grants issued by the Florida Department of Transportation Aviation (FDOT Aviation) are also available for eligible projects. The FDOT Aviation issues an Airport Permit and ensures the safe and continued operation of the airport through annual safety compliance inspections.

The City of Venice does not control the airspace over the airport or the city.

What are some of the airport deed restrictions the City must observe?

Some of the deed restrictions stipulate that the city may not use or transfer the airport property for purposes other than airport-related activities without the prior consent of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). In addition, the property must be used and maintained as an airport. The property must be used to benefit the public without unjust discrimination, which means, in general, that the city may not discriminate against various classes of aircraft that can use the airport. The city may not give an exclusive "right of use" of the airport at the expense of other persons in the same class, who must have the same right. The city is required to protect the aerial approaches to the airport. The U.S. can take control of the airport in a national emergency. Specific requirements exist while the airport remains under federal control. Copies of the deeds are available for review at the Venice Airport Administration Office.

Does the City have any other limitations or restrictions on airport operations?

Yes, the city has other limitations and restrictions on airport operations. As a condition of accepting federal grants, the city assured the federal government, under Title 49, U.S.C., that it would agree to several grant assurances, many similar to deed assurances. As previously noted, the city must continue to operate the airport as a public-use airport and make it available to the public without unjust discrimination for all types, kinds, and classes of aeronautical activities, including commercial aeronautical activities that offer services to the public at the airport. As noted above, the city must protect the aerial approaches to the airport. These grant obligations typically last for 20 years following the issuance of the Federal grant, or in some instances, the improvement's useful life. However, as noted above, the city must observe in perpetuity certain deed assurances incurred when the Federal Government conveyed the airport to the city.

What happens if the City does not observe these restrictions?

If the city fails to comply with deed restrictions, the U.S. Government may require the property to revert to federal control. The federal government may also pursue other remedies at its discretion in responding to violations of deed restrictions and grant obligations. The city may also voluntarily surrender control of the airport to the federal government or some other governing body, such as the Sarasota-Bradenton Airport Authority.

Who controls the airspace over the airport and the City of Venice?

The FAA has exclusive control of airspace in the United States. There are minor exceptions, such as some national parks. All airspace users are subject to the FAA's rules and regulations. These regulations cover aircraft and pilot registrations, operational control of all aircraft in flight, traffic patterns, altitudes, noise, safety matters, and many other aviation-related matters. The regulations are known as "FARs"—Federal Aviation Regulations. The City of Venice does not control the airspace over the city or the airport.

Can jet operations be restricted at Venice Municipal Airport?

Through deed restrictions and grant obligations, the City may not discriminate against various classes of aircraft that can safely use the airport. The airport's “Fly Friendly” Procedures recommend turbo-jet aircraft operations designed to minimize noise impacts on the surrounding neighborhoods. Using Runway 5–23 when other traffic and wind conditions are suitable minimizes noise in surrounding communities.

Can the airport tell pilots not to fly over my neighborhood?

The city cannot instruct pilots to use a particular runway or to avoid overflying a specific area or neighborhood. Per the Federal Preemption on Airspace Regulation (49 U.S.C. 40101), the FAA has exclusive authority to regulate airspace over the United States and prescribe air traffic regulations for aircraft.

However, the airport has a Community Outreach Manager who informs pilots of overflights' impact on the residential community, promotes noise mitigation procedures, and asks that such overflights of the city be avoided, safety permitting.

Venice's noise mitigation procedures, including considerations about night flying, are voluntary requests to pilots and are not mandatory. Given the airport's location and the proximity of surrounding neighborhoods, some overflight is inevitable.

Can the city dictate which runway pilots should use to take off or land?

Pilots (of any aircraft) may choose any of the four available runways, depending on several factors, including prevailing winds or other meteorological conditions, other traffic in the airport's aircraft traffic pattern, day or night operational considerations, or for departure, suitability for safe entry into the controlled airspace environment, among other considerations. Venice does not have a control tower, so determining why an individual pilot selected a particular runway may not always be feasible. Pilots are encouraged to follow the Venice Airport voluntary "Fly Friendly" procedures. See FAA AC90-66 B.

Can the Venice Airport be moved off Venice Island to free up that land for other uses?

Venice Airport can be moved only with the FAA's prior permission. If the city built a new airport elsewhere that meets the current FAA standards, including all existing facilities, equal or better utility, and all work completed, the FAA would likely be willing to approve moving the airport and closing the existing facility. Any new Venice Municipal Airport must be completed and operational before the existing airport can be closed. Based on a study conducted many years ago, the cost of building a new airport comparable to the existing one, including facilities, was estimated to be more than $130 million. The results were that moving the airport was not feasible.

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How does the Airport benefit the city?

Venice Airport's benefits to the city and the surrounding regional area extend beyond the economic contributions from employees, tenants, visitors, and the businesses that operate there. That benefit is considerable. According to a Florida Statewide Aviation Economic Impact Study Update, the Venice Municipal Airport has a positive regional economic impact of millions of dollars annually. The airport occupying land space at the south end of Venice Island has created an undeveloped buffer of open space. Airport land was made available for lease to the Venice Lakes Golf Course and Sharky's Restaurant, which land is now owned by the city. The Maxine Barrette Park is located on former airport land.

Importantly, medical evacuation flights and various charity flights use the airport. Many young people who pursue aviation careers get their first taste of aviation through the Experimental Aircraft Association's Young Eagles program. The airport's value has long been recognized in the event of a hurricane or other natural disaster. Additionally, the city uses airport land as a temporary festival ground.

How does the city finance airport operations?

The City of Venice owns and operates the Venice Municipal Airport (KVNC) as an enterprise fund. Operating and capital budgets are user-funded through land and hangar leases, fuel sale flowage fees, and business facilities leases. Rents for hangars and certain ground leases are comparable to those of similar airports in the region.

The airport receives no City General Fund or taxpayer property tax monies for support. Revenue generated by the airport includes aeronautical and non-aeronautical rents, fees, charges, and other payments received by the airport sponsor, Venice. Airport revenue must be used for the operational and capital costs of the airport, the local airport system, or other facilities owned or operated by the airport owner or operator and directly and substantially related to the air transportation of passengers or property

The FAA's Policy and Procedures Concerning the Use of Airport Revenue (64 Federal Regulation. 7696; February 16, 1999) provides several examples of unlawful revenue diversion. Some of these examples include:

Paying more than the value of goods or services the airport receives.
Improper cost allocations.
Charging less than fair market value rental rates to non-aeronautical users, including the sponsor.
Directly subsidizing air carriers.
Using airport revenue for general economic development activities.
Paying for marketing and promotions not related to the airport.
Loaning money to other entities at less than prevailing rates; and
Using airport revenue to participate in some types of community events.

Does the city incur any obligations from accepting federal funds?

Upon accepting these federal grants, the city assured the federal government under Title 49, United States Code, that it would agree to certain grant assurances. Two of those most relevant to the operation of the airport call for the city to:

• Continue to operate the facility as a public-use airport.

• Make the airport available to the public on reasonable terms, without unjust discrimination, to all types, kinds, and classes of aeronautical activities, including commercial aeronautical activities that offer services to the public at the airport.

Do businesses on the airport pay real estate taxes?

Section 196.012(6) of the Florida Statutes exempts on-airport businesses that provide goods and services to the General Aviation public from paying Ad Valorem taxes. This exemption does not necessarily apply to all entities on the airport. Tax exemptions for on-airport businesses are not unique in this regard. Similar provisions may be available for other public venues, such as ports and marinas, where private companies lease property and make improvements that provide goods and services to the public, thereby enhancing their operations and viability. The Sarasota County Tax Assessor determines whether a property is taxable or exempt under the above-referenced Section. The City of Venice is not involved in this process. For further information on the tax status of an individual business, contact the Assessor's Office of Sarasota County.

Do any commercial airlines fly into the Venice Municipal Airport?

Commercial airlines do not fly into the Venice Municipal Airport. For passengers flying into the area, it is recommended that they use Sarasota-Bradenton International Airport, Charlotte County Airport (Punta Gorda), Tampa International Airport, or Southwest Florida Regional Airport for their commercial airline travel needs.

On February 13, 2003, Congress approved the "0" seat rule, which means that reliever airports within 25 nautical miles of major airports, such as Sarasota-Bradenton Airport, for example, do not have to provide passenger service to be eligible for federal capital improvement funds. President Bush signed this legislation into law in 2003. Venice Municipal Airport is less than 25 miles from Sarasota Bradenton Airport by U.S. 41.

Does Venice Municipal Airport have a curfew? If not, why not?

Venice Municipal Airport does not have a curfew or any mandatory noise restrictions. Very few general aviation public use airports have curfews. Those curfews were likely established before the adoption of the Airport Noise and Capacity Act of 1990. Although an officially established process (e.g., Part 150, Part 161 studies) exists for establishing a curfew, the FAA has not approved the establishment of a new curfew at a general aviation airport.

The FAA would have to support or fund a Part 150 noise compatibility study to impose any mandatory noise or flight restrictions. That study would then have to document the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) noise contours extending into residential areas. Otherwise, no mandatory access restrictions or curfews can be implemented. The FAA's and the state's essential criteria for noise compatibility planning are defined by the extent of the existing CNEL noise contour. Legally, an airport is considered "noise sensitive" when the 65 CNEL noise contour extends into residential areas. (This does not imply that some residents are not disturbed within the 60 CNEL or 55 CNEL noise contours.).

I have heard that airplanes perform "touch-and-go landings" at the airport at night. Is that true? If so, why do they have to do them at night?

It is rare for airplanes to perform touch-and-go landings at night. A touch-and-go landing is one in which the aircraft touches down on the runway, adds power, and then takes off again before coming to a complete stop.

Touch-and-go landings are a training maneuver pilots and flight instructors use to maximize the training period or maintain proficiency in landings. Nighttime operations are more challenging for pilots than daytime operations; therefore, pilots train at night to develop and sustain their nighttime landing proficiency.

Federal Aviation Regulations require that to carry passengers at night, the pilot perform three nighttime "full stop" landings and takeoffs every 90 days. Depending on several operational considerations, an aircraft can meet this nighttime requirement by either taxiing back to the beginning of the runway to take off or taking off from its current position on the same runway (this latter maneuver is referred to as a stop-and-go). To a nearby listener, particularly at night, it isn't easy to distinguish between a stop-and-go landing and a touch-and-go landing.

To meet this passenger-carrying requirement, the FAA requires that full-stop landings and takeoffs occur during the period beginning 1 hour after sunset and ending 1 hour before sunrise (as published in the American Air Almanac). Touch-and-go landings at night are infrequent and are primarily used during daytime flight training.

Does Venice have any restrictions on nighttime & early morning operations?

Venice does not have nighttime or early morning flight restrictions. Venice can not impose a curfew or establish mandatory limits on nighttime or early morning operations. However, the Venice "Fly Friendly" procedures request that when operational safety permits, arriving and departing pilots use Runway 5 or 23 between 8:00 PM and 7:00 AM. Runway 23 is the recommended calm wind runway. However, many pilots may choose not to use Runway 23 at night due to the "black hole" effect of flying out over the Gulf of Mexico with minimal or no visible horizon. This "black hole" effect can be hazardous, particularly for pilots using visual flight only. Pilots are asked to avoid maintenance run-ups, auxiliary power unit (APU) operations, and touch-and-go operations between 10:00 PM and 7:00 AM when possible.

What measures is the airport taking to address aircraft noise and complaints?

Venice Airport has a Community Outreach Manager who works with airport users to promote the Airport's Fly-Friendly Procedures. Airport staff also continues to communicate the need to use recommended "Fly-Friendly" flying techniques and procedures to all pilots and flight instructors. Staff also disseminates noise mitigation procedures and requests adherence through airport association meetings, pilot and instructor meetings, pilot flight planning websites and guides, letters to pilots, and direct calls to pilots based on noise complaints. The Airport Automated Weather Observation System (AWOS) also provides noise mitigation advice to pilots.

Written noise reduction flight procedures are graphically depicted at the departure end of each runway. Airport staff receive and log complaints about aircraft noise. Anyone calling to file a noise complaint may state their name and address, the time the aircraft was observed, and, if possible, a brief description of the plane (e.g., color, number of engines, low or high-mounted wings, etc.). A daytime phone number should be provided if a return call is desired.

The Airport Noise and Capacity Act of 1990 ("ANCA") (49 U.S.C. 47521 et seq.) restricts airport proprietors from implementing new "noise or access restrictions" on aircraft without meeting rigorous substantive requirements, following public administrative procedures, and seeking FAA review and approval.

ANCA sets the threshold for approval of new local noise or access rules. The regulations adopted by the FAA to implement ANCA, 14 C.F.R. Part 161, require that an airport sponsor demonstrate to the FAA that the proposed restriction:
(1) is reasonable, non-arbitrary, and non-discriminatory.
(2) does not create an undue burden on interstate or foreign commerce.
(3) is not inconsistent with maintaining the safe and efficient utilization of the navigable airspace.
(4) does not conflict with any existing federal statute or legislation.
(5) has been afforded adequate opportunity for public comment; and
(6) does not create an undue burden on the National Aviation System.

An airport sponsor or proprietor of a federally obligated airport, such as Venice, must justify any new local noise or access restriction to the FAA in the form of a detailed, FAA-compliant cost-benefit analysis. 14 C.F.R. § 161.305(e)(2)(ii). Under Part 161, the FAA must approve any new mandatory (except voluntary) noise or access restriction before the local airport proprietor can implement that restriction.

Where can I get information about aircraft noise policies?

The Airport has voluntary and recommended noise mitigation policies. These voluntary procedures are recommendations; however, the pilot in command of the aircraft remains ultimately responsible for safe operations. A copy of these procedures is available at the Airport Administration Office on Airport Avenue.

I have heard that Runway 5–23 produces the least noise for surrounding neighborhoods. Can the airport direct pilots to use that runway?

Venice is a non-towered airport; therefore, the aircraft pilot in command selects the runway based on several factors. Some of these factors include wind direction and velocity, other aircraft in the airport traffic pattern (e.g., which runway is currently in use by these other aircraft), and the condition of the runway and its suitability for a particular aircraft. Wind direction generally determines which runway to use. This is particularly true for light aircraft. For example, pilots may use Runway 13, landing to the southeast, because the winds are blowing from that direction. Landing into the wind is safer. Larger aircraft are less sensitive to wind conditions up to a point. Runway 23 is designated as the noise mitigation or noise abatement and calm wind runway, with winds less than 3–5 miles per hour. Pilots are encouraged to use this runway when conditions permit. The final decision rests with the pilot in command. The use of Runway 5–23 by high-performance aircraft has increased substantially.

Runway 23 is the recommended calm wind runway. However, many pilots may choose not to use Runway 23 at night due to the “black hole” effect. Flights departing from Runway 23 over the Gulf of Mexico at night may frequently encounter a lack of visible horizon. The absence of a visible horizon can be a frequent occurrence when taking off over water at night and is hazardous not only for pilots flying under visual flight rules or in visual meteorological conditions but also for the unwary instrument-rated pilot.

Pilots (of any aircraft) may choose any of the four available runways, depending on several factors, including prevailing winds or other weather conditions, other traffic in the airport's aircraft traffic pattern, day or night operational considerations, or for departure, suitability for safe entry into the controlled airspace environment, among other considerations. Venice does not have a control tower, so determining why an individual pilot selected a particular runway may not be feasible. Pilots are encouraged to follow the Venice Airport voluntary “Fly Friendly” procedures. See FAA AC90-66 B.

Are departures at night safer from Venice's runways other than Runway 23?

Night departures from Runway 23 can be the most demanding. However, departing over the Gulf at night from any runway requires that pilots pay particular attention to aircraft altitude and attitude. The absence of a visible horizon can be a frequent occurrence when taking off over water at night and is hazardous not only for pilots flying under visual flight rules or in visual meteorological conditions but also for the unwary instrument-rated pilot.

What is an instrument approach?

Instrument Flight is conducted by referencing aircraft flight instruments to maintain coordinated flight without depending on a visible horizon. For aircraft operating under instrument flight rules (IFR), an instrument approach is a series of flight maneuvers according to a published set of procedures. These procedures enable the aircraft to fly from the beginning of the initial approach to a landing or to a point from which a landing can be made visually, under instrument flight conditions.

Precision and non-precision are two main classifications of instrument approaches or instrument approach procedures. Precision approaches use both lateral and vertical information to guide the aircraft to landing, while non-precision approaches provide lateral course information for landing aircraft. Some non-precision approaches may have a glide path.

The publications depicting instrument approach procedures are called Terminal Procedures, which pilots refer to as approach plates. These documents graphically depict pilots' specific procedure for a particular flight approach to a given runway. Approach plates or charts depict the prescribed altitudes and headings to be flown, as well as obstacles, terrain, and potentially conflicting airspace. They also list missed approach procedures and commonly used radio frequencies.

Does Venice have instrument approaches? If so, what kind?

Venice has FAA-developed instrument approach procedures for all Runways. These approaches are based on GPS. Recent advances in Global Positioning System (GPS) approach technology have enabled the creation of instrument approaches at many more airports, eliminating the need for ground-based navigation aids. Venice's FAA-developed GPS approaches are legal and greatly enhance the safety of landing aircraft and the surrounding neighborhoods during instrument flying conditions.

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What is a Runway Safety Area?

A runway safety area (RSA) is an area at the end of a runway prepared or suitable for reducing the risk of airplane damage in the event of an undershoot, overshoot, or excursion from the runway." Advisory Circular (AC) 150-5300-13, Airport Design, establishes criteria, guidelines, and nomenclature, including Runway Safety Areas (RSA), Runway Object-Free Area (ROFA), and Runway Protection Zone (RPZ). The circular and periodic changes are available on the FAA's website at:http://www.faa.gov/airports_airtraffic/airports/resources/advisory_circulars/index.cfm?template=Document_Listing

What is a Runway Protection Zone?

A runway protection zone (RPZ) is an imaginary surface-based projection in the air that extends from the end of the runway to enhance the protection of people and property on the ground**.** The RPZ is trapezoidal and is centered about the extended runway centerline. Advisory Circular (AC) 150-5300-13, Airport Design, establishes criteria, guidelines, and nomenclature, including Runway Safety Areas (RSA), Runway Object-Free Area (ROFA), and Runway Protection Zone (RPZ). The circular and periodic changes are available on the FAA's website at:

http://www.faa.gov/airports_airtraffic/airports/resources/advisory_circulars/index.cfm?template=Document_Listing.

Does Runway 13 – 31 have a Runway Protection Zone (RPZ) that extends into a residential area in Venice?

The installation of an emergency material arresting system at the southeast end of Runway 13, along with the subsequent reconfiguration of the portion of the runway available for takeoffs and landings, has substantially reduced the area of the Runway Protection Zone (RPZ) that extends into a residential area in Venice. As of this date, three houses remain in the RPZ. For that RPZ, the FAA stated in a letter to the city dated January 8, 2010 (on file at Venice City Hall), “Further, it should be noted that the RPZ and its predecessor, the Clear Zone, have existed over these homes in question for many years. The most recent Airport Layout Plan, prepared and approved by the City of Venice, showed the Runway 13 Clear Zone extending into this residential neighborhood.

Will the FAA take a house if it is in a Runway Protection Zone (RPZ)?

Neither the city nor the FAA will take a house in the RPZ. In a letter to the city dated January 8, 2010 (on file at the airport), the FAA said, “It is not unusual to have development in these areas not controlled by the airport owner.” Further, the FAA stated, “…the FAA is not mandating the City of Venice acquire these homes.”
The FAA does not have the power of eminent domain.

Did the GPS approach cause a Runway Protection Zone (RPZ) to be established at the northwest end of Runway 13–31?

A GPS approach does not create a Runway Protection Zone (RPZ). The RPZ has been in existence for many years. The FAA in a letter to the city dated January 8, 2010 (on file at Venice City Hall) said, "Further it should be noted that the RPZ and its predecessor, the Clear Zone, have existed over these homes in question *[northwest end of the airport, added for clarity]* for many years.

The 1969 ALP, prepared by the City of Venice, indicated that the Runway 13 Clear Zone extended into this residential neighborhood.

I understand the Sheriff's Aviation Unit is located at the Venice Municipal Airport. Why are they always flying over my house?

The Sarasota County Sheriff's Aviation unit has operated from Venice for many years. The Sheriff chose the Venice airport because it is the most centrally located airport in the county, providing the easiest access to all areas. The Sheriff's department is aware of the residential neighborhoods throughout Sarasota County and the noise sensitivity issues.

When a helicopter is conducting operations, we have been assured that it is a mission-critical operation for that location. They do not conduct non-mission essential operations, such as training, testing, or practicing, over neighborhoods.

The Sheriff's Aviation Unit has its dedicated hangar, situated behind other hangar buildings in the center of the field, and as far away from residential areas as possible.

When the Sheriff's helicopters must conduct operations over a populated area, procedures are in place to minimize the noise impacts. Procedures include conducting their mission and vacating the area immediately thereafter. Under normal circumstances, the helicopter typically returns to the airport via the Gulf of Mexico (from the west) to minimize the impact on the neighborhoods surrounding the airport. Its flight into and out of the Venice Airport are conducted in accordance with helicopter noise mitigation procedures when practical.

What types of missions does the Sheriff's Aviation Unit conduct?

As a law enforcement agency, their primary role is to support law enforcement actions. This includes search and rescue operations, pursuit of suspects, tactical coordination among law enforcement personnel on the ground, and surveillance. The helicopters are also a vital component of the Sarasota County Fire Department. Their equipment is equipped for fire suppression, and they are frequently called upon to fight fires, particularly during the dry season in areas inaccessible by ground equipment.

If law enforcement conducts pursuits or surveillance over neighborhoods, why isn't there a search light or spotlight? How do I know they're not just flying around?

The Sheriff's helicopters have a technologically advanced array of passive sensors that measure infrared or thermal energy. The imagery they can gather does not require visible light. Therefore, these observations may be associated with circling or loitering operations rather than traditional spotlights.

Did the terrorists who were in part responsible for the attacks on September 11, 2001, train at the Venice Airport? How was this allowed to happen, and who is accountable?

Venice Municipal Airport was one of more than 25 airports throughout the United States where the hijackers conducted flight training. Foreign national students were permitted to obtain flight training in the United States with minimal federal oversight, typically requiring only a passport and visa. International students can now still get flight training in the US, but with a much higher degree of scrutiny and oversight by the government. All flight schools in the U.S. followed federal regulations without any reported violations, including those at Venice Airport.

Is there any plan to expand the Venice Municipal Airport?

There is **no** plan to expand the airport. The airport is geographically limited by its surroundings. From time to time, businesses may change at the airport, or new businesses may be established, such as hangars or other aeronautical or non-aeronautical activities. Additionally, aircraft traffic may fluctuate based on economic conditions and the time of year. For example, the Sarasota County Sheriff's Aviation Unit constructed a new hangar many years ago. This was not considered an airport expansion. The construction of hangars for airplanes on airport property, which are available for aeronautical use, is not considered airport expansion. The Federal Aviation Administration requires that used and unused airport land be considered available for aeronautical use first. It may be considered for other airport-compatible uses if not required for aeronautical use.

Within Federal guidelines, the City controls what activities or businesses may or may not be established on the airport. As a federally-obligated airport, the city is required to observe airport deed restrictions and grant obligations pertaining to airport operations and land use.

Runway 5–23 is preferred for noise mitigation. The Federal Aviation Administration required that the RSA at the southwest end of the runway be cleared as part of the rehabilitation. The golf course driving range was located on airport property in the RSA and was subsequently relocated to another area on the golf course. That was not considered airport expansion.

The city will strive to enhance the airport's economic vitality and contribution to the city's overall welfare, taking into account the compatibility of the surrounding neighborhoods. Again, the City is bound by its deed restrictions and grant obligations regarding what it can and cannot do with the airport.

I have heard that Venice is a Reliever Airport. What does that mean?

Reliever Airport is a designation within the National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (NPIAS) that is given to an airport with a specified capacity in major metropolitan areas. The intent is to provide an alternative to using congested hub airports and provide general aviation access to the surrounding area. To be designated as a reliever airport, it must have 100 or more based aircraft or 25,000 annual itinerant operations. Venice meets those criteria and, as such, is a designated reliever airport for Sarasota-Bradenton International Airport (SRQ), serving as an alternative to SRQ for general aviation (GA) aircraft.

This definition is spelled out in the NPIAS in Chapter 11. Runway length does not enter into the designation of an airport as a reliever. The pilot in command is responsible for determining that their aircraft can safely use the available runways at an airport, based on the performance data in the Pilot's Operating Handbook for their plane. That is a requirement in 14 CFR Part 91.103, Preflight Action. Runway information is available to pilots in the FAA Airport Facility Directory and by Notice to Airmen (NOTAMS). Pilots are required to be aware of all factors concerning their intended flight, including runway conditions at the departure and arrival airports.

I have heard that Venice is a C II airport. What does that mean? What does the designation of B II, C II mean to Venice Airport?

All runways at Venice Airport are classified as C II Runways. This question arose some years back during the development of the Airport Master Plan Update. The C II or B II designation is focused on airport design and runway development. It is irrelevant today, as all Venice Airport Runways have been rehabilitated to meet the CII Aircraft criteria.

A C II or B II is an Airport Reference Code (ARC) that refers to the approach speed of a landing aircraft, i.e., C or B. The Roman numeral refers to the aircraft wingspan. The city has developed and/or updated numerous Airport Master Plans. The FAA only approves the Airport Layout Plan (ALP). However, the FAA can offer comments on the MPU for the city's consideration. As of 2025, an Airport Master Plan is currently undergoing an update.

Airport Master Plans prepared before 1989 would not include consideration of ARC because the FAA system of classification was first established in September 1989 with the issuance of Advisory Circular (AC) 150-5300-13, Airport Design.

This circular also established other criteria, guidelines, and nomenclature, including the Runway Safety Area (RSA), the Runway Object Free Area (ROFA), and the Runway Protection Zone (RPZ). The circular and periodic changes are available on the FAA's website.

http://www.faa.gov/airports_airtraffic/airports/resources/advisory_circulars/index.cfm?template=Document_Listing.

As noted above and in the circular, the ARC concerns Approach Speed (the component designated with a capital letter such as B or C) and Airport Design Group (wingspan), which is designated with the Roman numeral. An aircraft's approach speed is primarily determined by its inherent design characteristics and provides for the slowest, most stable, and safest approach and landing speed for that design.

Speeds associated with A, B, C, or D are in ascending order, with lower speed requirements to higher speed requirements. An aircraft in a B approach speed category would fly an approach to landing at a slower speed than an aircraft in a C or D category. The practical effect of aircraft landing speeds is in the distances required to stop.

The ARC need not be established by operations generated by a single aircraft type; it may be a group of aircraft types. Furthermore, not all aircraft need to be C II to qualify as part of the 500 annual operations thresholds applied in determining the ARC. For example, a King Air 200 is a B-II aircraft, but its operations still contribute to deciding the wingspan-related "II" component of the ARC. Conversely, Hawker 125-700s and 800s are C-I aircraft; their operations count toward the "C" portion of the ARC, which concerns approach speed, even though they are Design Group I with respect to the wingspan component of the ARC.

Although the ARC is an "Airport Reference Code," it is technically applied to runways, not to the airport. The Airport Reference Code (ARC) refers to the runway in question, for example, Runway 13 – 31, since an airport may have multiple runways with different ARC. The Airport Layout Plan (ALP) prepared by Dufresne Henry as part of the 2000 Airport Master Plan identified both Runways 13-31 and 5-23 (then designated as Runway 4 – 22) as C-II. The study and research for the 2006/2007 Hanson MEA draft Airport Master Plan Update confirmed the continued applicability of the C-II Airport Reference Code to both runways. The 2010 Master Plan Update confirmed the C-II ARC code. The C-II classification has been in place since the adoption of the 2000 Master Plan and Airport Layout Plan. The city cannot reduce the ARC for the Runways from C II to B II.. The FAA provided a grant to rehabilitate Runway 13–31 and, in correspondence with the city on several occasions, indicated that such a change for that runway is not permitted. Runway 13–31 and Runway 5–23 are Class II Runways.

Can the City reduce the Area of Runway 5–23?

The city cannot reduce the ARC for Runway 5–23. It is the preferred noise mitigation runway. It was rehabilitated to C II Standards. The Master Plan Update draft (MPU) and accompanying Airport Layout Plan (ALP), approved by the City Council in 2010 and the FAA in 2011, reflect Runway 5–23 (then 4–22) as a C-II runway.

How can I tour the airport?

Contact the Airport Administration Office on Airport Avenue.

Can I get an airplane ride at the airport?

Airplane rides may be arranged by contacting among others the flight school on the airport or the Fixed Base Operator (FBO).

Can I obtain a speaker for my homeowners' association or another organization?

Contact the Airport Administration Office on Airport Avenue.

Skydiving Operations

The FAA considers skydiving operations to be a legitimate aeronautical activity. As such, Venice is required to permit skydiving operations. However, such operations are conducted under an agreement between the airport and the skydiving operator. Contact the airport administration with questions regarding skydiving. As of the printing of these Frequently Asked Questions, there are no skydiving operations at the airport.

Does Venice Municipal Airport have a control tower?

The Venice Municipal Airport does not have an Air Traffic Control Tower (ATCT). Only approximately 500 of the more than 5,000 public-use airports in the U.S. have Air Traffic Control Towers (ATCTs). In addition to the public-use airports, there are many more private airports. Venice is called a non-towered airport. The FAA provides guidelines and recommended procedures for air traffic operations at non-towered airports, such as Venice (FAA Circular AC 90-66B).

An ATCT has been proposed for the Venice Airport in the past. Should the Venice City Council, the owner and operator of the airport (designated as the airport sponsor), determine that a tower is warranted for the airport, a request could be submitted to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). The Florida Department of Transportation, Aviation Division, is also involved; however, the deciding authority ultimately rests with the FAA. Following a study on the need for an ATCT at Venice, the FAA determines whether one is appropriate and required. The basis for the need for an ATCT is being evaluated in the 2025 Master Planning process.

Should the FAA determine that the conditions at the airport support the establishment of an ATCT, a further determination is made as to whether one of three types of towers would be appropriate: an FAA tower, a Contract Tower, or a Remote-Control Tower. The financial requirements of an FAA Tower are primarily the responsibility of the FAA—an FAA contract funds the operations of the Contract Tower. Funding for constructing and equipping a contract tower is not necessarily an FAA responsibility. Sources of funds include FAA grants, Airport Improvement Program grants, other Federal Grants, State funding, and local airport funding. Generally, several years will elapse before an ATCT is constructed and operational if it is approved. Punta Gorda Airport (PGD) has a contract tower staffed and operated by FAA-certified controllers, but employees of the Contractor. Sarasota Airport is an FAA tower.

An ATCT's primary purpose is to control (inherent in the name) and manage aviation traffic in the air, within its designated control area, and on the airport's grounds. An ATCT can benefit both the community and the airport users. Much like traffic lights, stop signs, and other traffic management devices on the ground, an ATCT performs those functions for airports, controlling traffic.

Pilots are trained to "see and avoid" and maintain situational awareness of other aircraft, whether taxiing on the airport surface (watching for ground vehicles or other obstructions) or flying. At a non-towered airport, pilots become their own air traffic control by looking and listening on a common radio frequency for other aircraft in the traffic pattern or vehicles operating on airport surfaces. The task becomes more challenging when dealing with numerous other aircraft, which may have different operational characteristics. This system has been effective for years due to the training and professionalism of pilots, but it is now more demanding, given the significant increase in air traffic. A control tower provides an additional "set of eyes" that can observe and ensure the safe and efficient movement of aircraft approaching the airport, in the traffic pattern, and on the ground.

A control tower could also inform pilots of local noise mitigation procedures. Typically, only one runway is used at a time. In addition to controlling and sequencing air traffic, a tower manages traffic on most of the airport grounds. An ATCT can be a beneficial conduit for critical information ranging from weather conditions and communications to airfield conditions.