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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) located several miles south of Venice's central business district. Venice Municipal Airport is a General Aviation, Federally Obligated Airport, and a 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 deeds of land transfer following the war. In 1947, the War Assets Administrator (later the General Services Administration) deeded to the City the basic airport land pursuant to the Surplus Property Act of 1944. A Federally Obligated Airport, such as Venice, is one that has incurred certain responsibilities, requirements, limitations, and restrictions by accepting Federal assistance in either the form of 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 is non-airline aviation that includes among other segments, business/corporate aircraft, personally owned aircraft, and aviation businesses such as charter, sightseeing, aircraft rental or flight training. The airport serves the general aviation needs of the local area by providing business-related flying, and 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.

Although the airport is open to the public and to visiting aircraft, no commercial airlines operate at the Venice Municipal Airport. There are over 200 aircraft annually based at the airport. Businesses operating from the airport include a Fixed Base Operator, flight training school, aircraft and avionics maintenance, a restaurant, a missionary support operation, and the Sarasota County Sheriff's Aviation Unit. Most recent reported traffic data indicates there are over 90,000 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 between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. five days a week. Suncoast Air Center, the airport's Fixed Base Operator, is open seven days a week (contact Suncoast 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. Additionally, the City of Venice website Airport Department also includes a short "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 and 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 safe and efficient operation and maintenance of the airport.

The city works to balance the impacts of airport operations and the needs of airport users with the needs of the community. The city in accordance with 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. The airport is managed by an Airport Director and his staff. The Airport Director reports to the Venice City Manager.

The City of Venice owns and operates the Venice Municipal Airport as an enterprise fund. Operating and capital budgets are user funded through land and hangar leases, fuel sale flowage fees, leasing airport land, facilities and hangars to commercial aviation companies and individual aircraft owners. Neither City General Funds nor taxpayer property tax monies are used to 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 in great part are user-funded through taxes levied on aviation fuels, passenger tickets, air transportation of goods, and the use of civil aircraft. State grants issued by the FDOT Aviation are also available for eligible projects.

The FDOT Aviation issues an Airport Permit and assures the safe, 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 are that the city may not use or transfer the airport property to other than airport purposes without 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 are able to 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, which must have the same right.



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Of importance, 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. Certain 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 other limitations and restrictions on their operation of the airport?**

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 will agree to several grant assurances (many like the deed assurances). As previously noted, the city must continue to operate the airport as a public use airport and be made available to the public without unjust discrimination to all types, kinds, and classes of aeronautical activities, including commercial aeronautical activities offering services to the public at the airport. And as noted above the city must protect aerial approaches to the airport. These grant obligations normally last for 20 years following the issuance of the Federal grant, or in some instances the useful life of the improvement. However, as noted above the city must observe in perpetuity certain deed assurances incurred when the Federal Government conveyed the airport to the city. A copy of the current grant assurances is available for review at the Venice Airport Administration Office.

The State of Florida Department of Transportation, Aviation Office (FDOT, Aviation), issues an Airport Permit and assures the safe, continued operation of the airport.

**What happens if the City does not observe these restrictions?**

If the city does not abide by deed restrictions, the U.S. Government may require that the property revert to federal control. The federal government also has other remedies they may pursue at their 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, as an example the Sarasota-Bradenton Airport Authority.

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

The FAA has exclusive control of the airspace over the United States. A minor exception exists in the case of some local national park space, the control of which the FAA has granted to the park.

All airspace users are subject to the rules and regulations of the FAA. These regulations cover aircraft and pilot registrations, operational control of all aircraft in the air, traffic patterns, altitude, noise, safety matters and a myriad of other aviation-related matters. The regulations are known as "FARs" - Federal Aviation Regulations.



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

**Can jet operations be restricted at Venice Municipal Airport?**

The City by deed restrictions and grant obligations may not discriminate against various classes of aircraft that are able to use the airport. The airport must be open to any aircraft that can safely use the Airport. The airports “Fly Friendly” Procedures have recommendations for turbo-jet aircraft operations designed to minimize noise impacts on the surrounding neighborhoods. The use of Runway 5 – 23 when other traffic and wind conditions are appropriate minimizes noise in surrounding neighborhoods.

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

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

The city cannot tell pilots to use a particular runway or not to overfly a particular area or neighborhood. In accordance with the Federal Preemption on Airspace Regulation (49 U.S.C. 40101), the FAA has exclusive authority in regulating airspace over the United States and prescribes air traffic regulations on the flight of aircraft.

Although airport staff makes pilots aware of the impact that overflights have on the residential community, promotes noise mitigation procedures and asks that such overflights be avoided, safety permitting, the City does not have the authority to address or act upon aircraft in flight.

Venice’s noise mitigation procedures, including considerations about night flying, are voluntary requests to pilots and are not mandatory. Given the location of the airport and the proximity of surrounding neighborhoods over flight of nearby neighborhoods is inevitable in some instances.

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

Pilots (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 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 in most instances selected a particular runway is generally not feasible. Pilots are encouraged to follow the Venice Airport voluntary “Fly Friendly” procedures. See FAA AC90-66B.



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

Venice Airport can be moved only with the prior permission of the FAA. If the city built a new airport elsewhere to 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 the closure of the existing facility.

Any new Venice Municipal Airport would have to be completed and operational before the existing airport could be closed. The cost to build a new airport comparable to the existing airport, including facilities, based on a very earlier study has been estimated to be more than \$130 million. The City in the past did contract for an evaluation of the cost and feasibility of moving the airport. The results of the study were that moving the airport was un-affordable and, therefore, not feasible.

### **How does the Airport benefit the city?**

The benefits the Venice Airport provide the city and the surrounding regional area go beyond economic contributions from employees, tenants, visitors, and the businesses that operate there. Nonetheless that benefit is considerable. According to the Florida Statewide Aviation Economic Impact Study Update, August 2014 the Venice Municipal Airport's positive regional economic impact is more than \$43 million annually. The existence of the airport occupying land space at the south end of the 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 restaurant property 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 go on to aviation careers get their first taste of aviation through the Experimental Aircraft Association's Young Eagles program. The value of the airport 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, leasing airport land (as an example Venice Lakes Golf Club), facilities and hangars to commercial aviation companies and individual aircraft owners. Rents for hangars and certain ground leases are comparable and in the range with other like airports in the region.



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The airport does not receive any 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 in excess of 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 itself.
- 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 will 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, kind and classes of aeronautical activities, including commercial aeronautical activities offering services to the public at the airport.

### **Do businesses on the airport pay real estate taxes?**

In general, Section 196.012(6) of the Florida Statutes exempts on-airport businesses that provide goods and services to the General Aviation public from the payment of 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 for other public venues, such as ports and marinas where private businesses lease property and make improvements that provide goods and services to the public that enhance their operations and viability may be available under the Statute. The Sarasota County Tax Assessor determines the determination as to taxable or exempt under the above referenced Section. The City of Venice is not involved in this process.



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For further information on the tax status of an individual business, contact the Assessor's Office of Sarasota County.

**Do any airlines fly into the Venice Municipal Airport?**

Commercial airlines do not fly into the Venice Municipal Airport. The Venice Municipal Airport is not served by a commercial airline.

For passengers flying into the area, it is suggested they use the Sarasota Bradenton International Airport, Charlotte County Airport (Punta Gorda), Tampa International Airport or Southwest Regional Airport for their commercial airline travel needs.

On February 13, 2003, Congress approved the "0" seat rule, which means reliever airports within 25 nautical miles of major airports, Sarasota Bradenton Airport as an 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 way of U.S 41. There are no plans to seek commercial airline service for Venice Municipal Airport.

**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, and those were established prior to the adoption of the Airport Noise and Capacity Act of 1990. While there is officially a process (e.g., Part 150, Part 161 studies) that can be used to establish a curfew, the FAA has not approved the establishment of a new curfew at a general aviation airport.

To impose any mandatory noise or flight restrictions, the FAA would have to support or fund a Part 150 noise compatibility study. That study would then have to document the 65 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 basic criteria for noise compatibility planning is defined by extent of the 65 CNEL noise contour. Legally an airport is considered as "noise sensitive" when the 65 CNEL noise contour reaches into residential areas. (This is not to imply that some residents are not disturbed within the 60 CNEL or 55 CNEL noise contours.)

Venice does not have any 65 CNEL noise contour beyond airport boundaries.

**I have heard that airplanes do 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 airplane touches down on the runway adds power and then takes off again prior to coming to a full stop.



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Touch and go landings are a training maneuver pilots and flight instructors use to achieve the most efficient use of a training period, or to maintain or increase proficiency in landings. For pilots, nighttime operations are more challenging than daytime operations. Consequently, pilots train at night to develop and maintain nighttime landing proficiency.

Additionally, Federal Aviation Regulations require that to carry passengers at night, pilots in command must perform three night “full stop” landings every 90 days.

To meet this nighttime requirement, depending on several operational considerations, this can result in an aircraft taxiing back either to the beginning of the runway to takeoff or taking off from the same runway (this last maneuver is referred to as a stop and go). To a nearby listener, particularly at night, it is difficult to distinguish between a stop and go landing and a touch and go landing.

For purposes of meeting this passenger-carrying requirement the FAA requires that the full stop landings and takeoffs must be during the period beginning 1 hour after sunset and beginning 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 any nighttime or early morning flight restrictions. Venice can not impose a curfew or establish any mandatory restrictions on nighttime or early morning operations. However, the Venice voluntary “Fly Friendly” procedures do request that when operational safety permits, arriving and departing pilots should use Runway 5 or 23 between the hours of 8:00 PM and 7:00 AM. Runway 23 is the recommended preferred calm wind runway. However, many pilots may choose to not 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 that, when possible, maintenance run-ups, auxiliary power unit (APU) operations and touch-and-go operations should be avoided between the hours of 10:00 PM and 7:00 AM.

### **What is the airport doing to address aircraft noise and noise complaints?**

Venice Airport has Voluntary Fly Friendly Procedures. Airport staff continues to work with pilots and flight instructors to communicate the need to apply recommended “Fly Friendly” flying techniques and procedures.

Staff also disseminates noise mitigation procedures and requests adherence through airport association meetings, pilot and instructor meetings, pilot flight planning web sites 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



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Written noise reduction flight procedures are graphically depicted at the departure end of each runway. Airport staff receives and logs aircraft noise complaints. 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 aircraft (e.g., color, number of engines, low or high mounted wings, etc.). If a return call is desired a daytime phone number should be provided.

The Airport Noise and Capacity Act of 1990 (“ANCA”) 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 like 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 other than voluntary noise or access restriction before the local airport proprietor may implement that restriction.

### **Where can I get information about aircraft noise policies?**

The City has voluntary and recommended noise mitigation policies. These voluntary procedures are recommendations, but the pilot in command of the aircraft is responsible for safe operations at all times. 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 amount of noise for surrounding neighborhoods. Can the airport direct pilots to use that runway?**

Venice is a non-towered airport consequently the pilot in command of the aircraft, based on several factors, selects the runway. Some of these factors are wind direction and velocity of the wind, other aircraft in the airport traffic pattern e.g., what runway is currently in use by these other aircraft, and the condition of the runway and its suitability for a particular aircraft.



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Wind direction generally determines which runway to use, and this is particularly true for light aircraft. As an example, pilots may elect to 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 the noise mitigation or noise abatement and calm wind runway (winds less than 3 – 5 miles per hour). Pilots are encouraged to use this runway when conditions permit. The final decision is that of 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 on Runway 23 over the Gulf of Mexico at night may frequently encounter the absence of any visible horizon. The absence of a visible horizon can be a frequent occurrence when taking off over water at night and is hazardous for not only pilots flying under visual flight rules or in visual meteorological conditions, but also for the unwary instrument rated pilot.

Except for takeoffs and landings on Runway 13 (takeoff or landing to the southeast) whichever of the other 3 runways are in use a traffic pattern will be over surrounding neighborhoods. Pilots (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 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 in most instances selected a particular runway is generally not feasible. Pilots are encouraged to follow the Venice Airport voluntary “Fly Friendly” procedures. See FAA AC90-66B

### **Are departures at night from Venice’s other runways safer?**

As a general note while night departures from Runway 23 can be the most demanding departing over the Gulf at night from any runway require 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 for not only 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 that conducted by reference to aircraft flight instruments to maintain coordinated flight without depending on reference to the 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.



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These procedures allow for the aircraft under instrument flight conditions to fly from the beginning of the initial approach to a landing, or to a point from which a landing may be made visually.

There are two main classifications of instrument approaches or instrument approach procedures: precision and non-precision. Precision approaches use both lateral and vertical information to guide the aircraft to landing. Non-precision approaches provide lateral course information only to landing aircraft.

The publications depicting instrument approach procedures are called Terminal Procedures but are referred to by pilots as approach plates. These documents graphically depict the specific procedure for pilots to use for a particular type of flight approach to a given runway.

Approach plates or charts depict prescribed altitudes and headings to be flown, as well as obstacles, terrain, and potentially conflicting airspace. In addition, 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 to all Runways. These instrument approaches are based on GPS. Recent advances in Global Positioning Systems (GPS) approach technology have permitted the creation of instrument approaches at many more airports without the use of any ground-based navigation aids.

### **Are the Instrument (GPS) approaches at Venice Municipal Airport legal?**

All Instrument (GPS) approaches at the airport are legal and developed by the FAA. Venice's GPS approaches were developed by the FAA are legal and greatly enhance the safety of landing aircraft and the surrounding neighborhoods during instrument flying conditions.

### **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 damage to airplanes in the event of an under shoot, 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](http://www.faa.gov/airports_airtraffic/airports/resources/advisory_circulars/index.cfm?template=Document_Listing)



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### **What is a Runway Protection Zone?**

A runway protection zone (RPZ) briefly is an imaginary airport protection surface in the air off the runway end to enhance the protection of people and property on the ground.

The RPZ is trapezoidal in shape 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](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 and the subsequent shifting of the portion of the runway available for takeoffs and landings has substantially reduced that part of the RPZ that extends into a residential area in Venice. As of this date three houses remain in the RPZ. With respect to 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 1969 Airport Layout Plan, which was 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 or 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 has 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 eminent domain power.

### **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.



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The 1969 ALP, which was prepared by the City of Venice, showed the Runway 13 Clear Zone extending 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 in the county. The Sheriff’s department is aware of the residential neighborhoods throughout Sarasota County and the noise sensitivity issues.

When the helicopter is conducting operations, we have been assured that it is a mission operation critical to that location. They do not train, test, practice, or otherwise conduct non-mission essential operations over neighborhoods.

The Sheriff’s Aviation Unit has their own dedicated hangar, buffered behind other hangar buildings, in the middle of the field and away from residential areas to the greatest extent possible.

When the Sheriff’s helicopter 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 generally returns to the airport via the Gulf of Mexico (from the west) to minimize impacts on the neighborhoods surrounding the airport. Its flight in to 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 flights in support of law enforcement actions. This includes search and rescue, pursuit of suspects, tactical coordination of law enforcement on the ground and surveillance. The helicopter is also a vital component of the Sarasota County Fire Department. Their equipment has been fitted for fire suppression, and they are frequently called upon to fight fires, particularly in the dry season in areas not easily accessed by ground equipment.

**If they are law enforcement conducting 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 helicopter is equipped with a technologically advanced array of passive sensors which measure infrared or thermal energy.



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The imagery they can gather does not require visible light. Therefore, circling, or loitering operations may be associated with these types of observations 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 responsible?**

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 a minimum of federal oversight in the form of a passport and visa.

International students are still able to obtain 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 violations including Venice Airport.

**Is there any plan to expand the Venice Municipal Airport?**

There is **Not** a plan to expand the airport. The airport is geographically limited in size by its surroundings. From time-to-time businesses may change at the airport or new businesses may be established on the airport, such as hangars or other aeronautical or non-aeronautical activities. Additionally, aircraft traffic may increase or decrease based on economic conditions and the time of year. As an example, the Sarasota County Sheriff's Aviation Unit constructed a new hangar for its operations many years back. This was not considered an airport expansion. Construction of hangars for airplanes on airport property available for aeronautical use is not airport expansion. The Federal Aviation Administration requires that used and unused airport land be first considered available for aeronautical use. If not required for aeronautical use, then it may be considered for other airport compatible uses.

Within Federal guidelines the City does have control over 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 the runway that is preferred for noise mitigation. The Federal Aviation Administration required that as a part of the rehabilitation the RSA at the southwest end of the runway be cleared. The golf course driving range was in the RSA on airport property and was moved to another location on the golf course. That was not considered airport expansion.

The airport is an economic benefit to Venice and the surrounding area.



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The city will seek to enhance the economic vitality of the airport and its contribution to the welfare of the city in considerations of the compatibility of surrounding neighborhoods. Again, the City is bound by its deed restrictions and grant obligations as to what it can and can not do on the airport as well as what it can exclude.

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

Reliever Airport is a designation within the National Plan of Integrated Airports Systems (NPIAS) that is given to an airport with a given capacity in major metropolitan areas. The intent is to provide an attractive 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) and is intended to be an alternative to SRQ for 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. It is incumbent upon the pilot in command to make the determination that his/her aircraft will be able to safely use the runways available at an airport based upon the performance data contained in the Pilots Operating Handbook for their aircraft. That is a requirement in 14 CFR Part 91.1 03, Preflight Action.

Runway information available to pilots is available in the FAA Airport Facility Directory and by Notice to Airmen (NOTAMS). Pilots are required to be aware of all factors concerning and intended flight including runway conditions at the departure and arrival airport.

### **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 the Venice Airport?**

All Venice Airport Runways are classified as C II Runways. The question comes up from time to time. The question arose some years back during the development of the current Airport Master Plan Update. The Venice Municipal Airport continues to be designated as a CII Airport. The C II or BII designation is focused on airport design and runway development and is not relevant today, since all Venice Airport Runways have been rehabilitated as C II Runways and meet criteria for CII and BII Aircraft.

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 conducted Airport Master Plans or updates (MPU) in 1969, 1975, 1985, and 2000, and a draft study in 2007. A revised plan including an airport layout plan or ALP was developed and approved by the FAA in 2011. The FAA approves only the ALP. However, the FAA can and does offer comments on the MPU for City consideration.



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Airport Master Plans prepared before 1989 would not include consideration of ARC because that 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 Runway Safety Area (RSA), Runway Object Free Area (ROFA), and Runway Protection Zone (RPZ). The circular and periodic changes are available on the FAA's website. The FAA changes criteria and guidelines from time to time to address Congressional Direction and meet other requirements.

[http://www.faa.gov/airports\\_airtraffic/airports/resources/advisory\\_circulars/index.cfm?template=Document\\_Listing](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. The approach speed of an aircraft is primarily determined by inherent aircraft design characteristics and is a speed that provides for the slowest most stable and safe approach and landing speed for that design.

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

Further, the aircraft do not all need to be C-II to qualify as part of the 500 annual operations thresholds applied in determining that ARC. For example, a King Air 200 is a B-II aircraft, but its operations still count toward determining 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 that concerns approach speed even though they are Design Group I with respect to the wingspan component of 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, as an 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. This 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.



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### **Can the City reduce the airport or runways from C II ARC to B II?**

The city cannot reduce the ARC for the Runways from C II to B II. The Airport Reference Code (ARC) refers to the runway in question, as an example Runway 13 – 31 since an airport may have multiple runways with different ARC. The FAA provided a grant to rehabilitate Runway 13 – 31 and indicated in correspondences with the city on several occasions that such a change for that runway is not permitted. Runway 13 – 31 and Runway 5 – 23 are C II Runways.

### **Can the City reduce the ARC of Runway 5 – 23?**

The city cannot reduce the ARC for Runway 5 – 23. It is the preferred noise mitigation runway for Venice. It was rehabilitated to CII 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, reflects 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 one of the flight schools on the airport or Suncoast Aircenter.

### **Can I get a speaker for my homeowner's association or other organization?**

Contact the Airport Administration Office on Airport Avenue.

### **Skydiving Operations**

The FAA considers skydiving operation to be a legitimate aeronautical activity. As such, Venice is required to permit skydiving operations. However, such operations are conducted in accordance with an agreement between the Airport and the Skydive Operator. Consult Airport Administration for questions concerning 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). About 500 of the over 5,000 public use airports in the U.S. have 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 like Venice (FAA Circular AC 90-66B).



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The addition of an ATCT has been proposed for the Venice Airport in the past. Should the Venice City Council, the owner and operator of the airport (deemed the airport sponsor), determine that a tower should be considered for the airport a request would be made to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). The Florida Department of Transportation, Aviation Division is also involved though the deciding authority rest with the FAA. The FAA following a study as to the need for an ATCT at Venice makes the determination as to whether one is appropriate and required.

Several factors and considerations play a role in such project. Should the FAA determine that the conditions at the airport support 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 (there are currently only two remote control towers operational in the U.S. and both are in a test phase). The financial requirements of an FAA Tower are primarily the responsibility of the FAA. Contract Tower's operations are funded by an FAA contract. Funding for the construction and equipping of 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, if approved several years will elapse before an ATCT is constructed and operational. Punta Gorda Airport has a contract tower staffed and operated by FAA certified controllers but employees of the Contractor. Sarasota Airport is a FAA tower.

There are three FAA contract tower subcontractors in the U.S, Midwest Air Traffic Control Services, Serco Management Services Inc., and Robinson Aviation (RVA) Inc. In some case Interagency agreements with entities such as the Air National Guard are used as well. A remote-control tower is a new technology-based approach using cameras and other monitoring tools. Remote towers are in limited use in several foreign countries.

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

Pilots are taught in training 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 worked for years due to the training and professionalism of pilots but is more demanding with significant increases in air traffic. A control tower provides another "set of eyes" that can observe and provide for a safe and efficient movement of aircraft approaching the airport, in the traffic pattern and on the ground.



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The air above the ground in the U.S. is divided into categories of airspace designations with different operating rules. With a control tower at Venice, likely a “Class D Airspace” could be established. The airspace area will be customized for the Venice Airport, and it could extend several miles from the center of the airport, (typically 4 miles). The bubble could be as high as 2,500 ft Above Ground Level (AGL). Aircraft wishing to land or take off or transit the airspace must establish radio contact with the control tower before entering the airport’s airspace and are controlled while in the airspace. The tower controller directs the aircraft to the runway in use.

A control tower could also make pilots aware of local noise mitigation procedures and normally only one runway at a time would be in use. A tower in addition to controlling and sequencing traffic in the air offers also 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.