

Venice Municipal Airport — VNC

150 E. Airport Ave., Venice, FL | 941-486-2711 | venicegov.com

VENICE MUNICIPAL AIRPORT (VNC) OVERVIEW

Venice Municipal Airport (VNC) opened in 1942 as the Venice Army Air Base, where the 3rd Army Air Force trained fighter pilots and mechanics before deployment overseas. In 1947, the federal government declared the base surplus and transferred the property to the City of Venice under the Surplus Property Act of 1944, establishing the City as the airport sponsor — a role it continues to hold today.

Venice Municipal Airport operates as a general aviation airport within the National Airports System, serving private, business, training, medical, law enforcement, and emergency response aircraft. The airport operates 24 hours a day, supports more than 200 based aircraft, includes 186 T-hangars, 80 tie-down spaces, approximately 20 aviation-related business tenants, and 182 residential units, and averages more than 110,000 annual operations. More than 500 aircraft owners are currently on the hangar waiting list. VNC is a designated reliever airport for general aviation activities and does not provide commercial airline or air cargo services.

RUNWAYS, AIRCRAFT AND OPERATIONAL LIMITS

VNC operates two runways, all designed to C-II standards, which determine the size and performance characteristics of aircraft the airport is built to accommodate. Pilots are responsible for determining whether their aircraft can safely operate on available runways based on performance data. The City cannot restrict aircraft types that can safely use the airport; jets may operate if they meet safety requirements.

CITY ROLE, FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS AND OPERATIONAL LIMITS

The City of Venice owns, operates and maintains the airport, including facilities, ground operations and property management. The City does not control aircraft in flight, flight paths or runway use; those are regulated by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). VNC is a federally obligated airport, meaning the City must comply with long-standing FAA requirements tied to the 1947 transfer of the property. These include:

- Property must remain an airport and stay open for public aviation use
- Land cannot be sold, repurposed or leased without federal approval
- Must be available to all aircraft types without discrimination
- Must protect runway approaches and surrounding airspace

NOTE: *If the City fails to comply with FAA requirements, it may result in loss of funding, civil penalties or a federal takeover.*

Because airports operate within the National Airports System and under Federal Aviation Administration regulations, there are some operational areas the City can influence and others it cannot regulate directly.

The City can:

- Encourage responsible flying, voluntary noise mitigation practices and use of ground power units
- Investigate community concerns related to aircraft activity, flight paths, and operating times
- Establish airport policies, hangar rates, and landing fees
- Coordinate with pilots, tenants, and flight schools to “fly friendly”

The City cannot:

- Impose mandatory curfews or flight restrictions
- Direct pilots to avoid specific neighborhoods
- Require specific runway use or flight paths
- Control aircraft operations regulated by the FAA

WHY THE AIRPORT MATTERS

The airport supports emergency response, disaster recovery, medical evacuation, public safety operations, economic activity, and aviation training. It also serves as critical infrastructure during hurricanes, including staging for utilities such as Florida Power & Light and other mass care and response deployments. The Sarasota County Sheriff’s Office helicopter unit and Bayflite medical transport are also based at the airport, allowing for centralized regional emergency response operations.

VNC supports local jobs and regional economic activity. A 2021 Florida Department of Transportation study estimates the airport supports approximately 1,400 jobs and generates \$198 million in annual economic impact. The airport operates as a self-supporting enterprise funded through leases, fuel fees, and other airport revenue. It does not receive local property tax funding and all revenue must be used for airport-related purposes.

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AIRPORT MASTER PLAN UPDATE

Venice Municipal Airport is updating its adopted 2011 Airport Master Plan to evaluate aviation needs over the next 5, 10, and 20 years and identify improvements needed to maintain safety, capacity, and operational efficiency. Similar to how local governments use long-range planning documents to guide future growth and infrastructure, an airport master plan serves as a planning tool to evaluate existing conditions, forecast future aviation demand, and identify potential long-term operational and facility needs.

Potential projects evaluated through the update may include runway and taxiway rehabilitation, hangar development, updated lighting and signage, improved access, and the evaluation of air traffic control services and emerging technologies.

The plan is informed by technical studies, aviation forecasting, environmental and noise analysis, and coordination with the Federal Aviation Administration and Florida Department of Transportation, along with stakeholder and community input. Along with VNC Airport staff and leadership, the process includes coordination with City staff, City Council, the FAA, Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), and an aviation consulting firm guiding the technical development of the master plan update.

The Airport Master Plan Update also helps maintain eligibility for future state and federal aviation funding. The following schedule outlines key milestones in the Airport Master Plan Update.

- ✓ November 2024 - Public kickoff meeting
- ✓ January 2026 - City Council presentation
- ✓ February 2026 - Technical & Citizen Advisory Panel meetings #1
- ✓ April 2026 - Technical & Citizen Advisory Panel meetings #2
- November 2026 - Public Workshop #1
- December 2026 - Technical & Citizen Advisory Panel meetings #3
- January 2027 - Public Workshop #2
- February 2027 - FAA and FDOT review and approval
- Spring 2027 - City Council acceptance

Community participation is an essential part of the Airport Master Plan Update process. Feedback and comments collected during workshops, public meetings, and stakeholder engagement activities are documented and reviewed by the aviation consulting team in coordination with the Federal Aviation Administration and Florida Department of Transportation to help inform planning discussions, evaluate potential opportunities, and better understand community perspectives and priorities.

KEY TERMS

- Based Aircraft:** an aircraft that is primarily stored, parked, or housed at a specific airport for the majority of the year. These aircraft are typically tied down outdoors or kept in hangars and use the airport as their home base.
- Fly Friendly:** refers to operational practices and community-minded efforts intended to reduce aviation impacts on surrounding neighborhoods, including noise mitigation, limiting low-altitude flights over residential areas when possible, reducing light pollution, minimizing fumes and encouraging considerate flight operations.
- Noise Mitigation:** refers to strategies, procedures, and infrastructure used to reduce the impact of aircraft noise on surrounding neighborhoods and communities while maintaining safe aviation operations.
- Terminal Building:** houses airport administrative offices; does not include baggage claim, TSA or commercial activity.
- Virtual Tower:** a digital system that allows federally qualified air traffic controllers to manage aircraft operations in the sky without being physically located in a traditional control tower at the airport.
- Part 150 Noise Study:** is a voluntary FAA process used to evaluate aircraft noise impacts and potential mitigation measures for areas exposed to 65-decibel Day-Night Average Sound Level or higher; the Airport Master Plan Update includes preparation of a Noise Exposure Map to determine whether any properties meet that threshold.
- FAA Part 139:** is a federal airport safety certification focused on areas such as firefighting, emergency response, inspections, and training; it does not mean the airport is becoming a commercial airport and is not part of the Airport Master Plan Update. It could be required by the FAA in the future, depending on airport operations.

CONSULTING FIRM

RICONDO & Associates Inc.,
Aviation Consulting Services

COST & FUNDING

\$1.2 million from the VNC enterprise fund, over three years; includes consulting fees, environmental and noise studies, and other technical studies and evaluations

TIMELINE

November 2024 to Spring 2027

QUESTIONS

For questions about VNC, please contact the Airport at 941-486-2711