

# FAA Approves Nation's First Public-Use Vertiport in Blackstone, Virginia

*VIPC provided funding to NAVOS Air for an Advanced Air Mobility research project that established the Vertiport.*

RICHMOND, VIRGINIA, UNITED STATES, September 27, 2023 /

EINPresswire.com/ -- In a significant milestone for the Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) industry, the FAA has issued the first conditional approval for

a Vertiport at Allen C. Perkinson Blackstone Army Airfield (KBKT), in Blackstone, Virginia. This action creates a path for the airport to establish the first licensed public-use Vertiport in the state and the nation. [NAVOS](#) Air, a Virginia-based air navigation services company, was the proponent of the Vertiport, as part of a project funded by the [Virginia Innovation Partnership Corporation](#) (VIPC) through the Virginia Commonwealth Center of Innovation for Autonomous Systems (C2IAS) grant program.

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*Tracy Tynan, Director, The Virginia Unmanned Systems Center at VIPC*

Blackstone Army Airfield (KBKT) is a dual-use airport for military and civilian flight operations. After it is licensed by the Virginia Department of Aviation, the Vertiport will be established and used as part of research on an end-to-end concept of operations NAVOS Air developed based on modifying and designing terminal instrument procedures and enroute infrastructure specifically for Uncrewed Aircraft System (UAS) and AAM use cases, with Vertiports serving as the anchors to that system. AAM is the next generation of the aviation industry that seeks to connect

previously underserved markets with innovative aircraft powered by emerging technologies.

“Leveraging existing approved infrastructure methods modified for new use cases and research applications will enable AAM operations sooner while providing opportunities to inform the development of future air traffic management systems and facilities” said Matt Burton, the technical director at NAVOS Air. “Designating Vertiports is part of the beginning of real progress



towards enabling AAM.”

NAVOS Air was the proponent of the Vertiport as part of a research project using an Uncrewed Aircraft System (UAS) to represent larger AAM vehicles for instrument flight operations research. These special instrument procedures have the potential to deliver UAS/AAM to airport locations, off-airport locations, and newly established Vertiports. Additionally, they will facilitate the integration of emerging airspace users with legacy users, while maximizing the efficiency and safety of airspace in this new era of aviation.

During its research, NAVOS Air also analyzed designating a heliport to be served by instrument procedures that were optimized for UAS operations. This allowed NAVOS Air to quickly work with the FAA when the guidance for Vertiport design was released in late 2022 to gain approval for the first Vertiport and take the next step to enabling AAM.

“We congratulate VIPC, Navos and the airport sponsor on their efforts to create the first public-use vertiport in the commonwealth,” said Greg Campbell, director of the Virginia Department of Aviation. “This development aligns with Virginia’s established role as a leader in the development unmanned systems and emerging technologies.”

The project was conducted with the Virginia Tech Mid-Atlantic Aviation Partnership (MAAP), which provided airworthiness review and flight authorization. UAV Pro enabled operations and safety management at Blackstone Army Airfield. Textron Systems operated the Textron Aerosonde UAS for the project’s flight tests.

VIPC established C2IAS in collaboration with Virginia Tech University and Old Dominion University for advancing unmanned systems technology. Its mission encompasses commercializing existing research, facilitating the creation of new companies, promoting applied research in unmanned systems, and driving substantial capital investment and job creation within the state of Virginia.

“Providing funding for the NAVOS Air Vertiport project is a prime example of the impact C2IAS has made to drive innovation in Virginia,” said Tracy Tynan, the director of the Unmanned Systems Center at VIPC. “The Virginia Unmanned Systems Center at VIPC is a valuable resources for nurturing startup ventures and supporting cutting-edge research that continue building on the state’s national leadership in unmanned systems.”

Earlier this year, VIPC conducted an economic impact study with NEXA Advisors of McLean that projects the AAM industry in Virginia has the potential to generate \$16 billion in new business activity and create more than 17,000 full-time jobs in the aerospace and supporting industries during the next 23 years. By 2045, it is anticipated that over 7.7 million passengers annually, which is equivalent to more than 21,000 passengers per day, will travel in AAM aircraft within Virginia.

About Virginia Innovation Partnership Corporation ( VIPC ): Connecting innovators with opportunities | As the nonprofit operations arm of the Virginia Innovation Partnership Authority (VIPA), VIPC is the commercialization and seed stage economic development driver in the Commonwealth that leads funding, infrastructure, and policy initiatives to support Virginia's innovators, entrepreneurs, startups, and market development strategies. VIPC collaborates with local, regional, state, and federal partners to support the expansion and diversification of Virginia's economy.

Programs include: Virginia Venture Partners (VVP) | VVP Fund of Funds (SSBCI) | Virginia Founders Fund (VFF) | Commonwealth Commercialization Fund (CCF) | Petersburg Founders Fund (PFF) | Smart Communities | The Virginia Smart Community Testbed | The Virginia Unmanned Systems Center | [Virginia Advanced Air Mobility Alliance \(VAAMA\)](#) | The Public Safety Innovation Center | Entrepreneurial Ecosystems | Regional Innovation Fund (RIF) | Federal Funding Assistance Program (FFAP) for SBIR & STTR | University Partnerships | Startup Company Mentoring & Engagement. For more information, please visit [www.VirginialPC.org](http://www.VirginialPC.org). Follow VIPC on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn.

About NAVOS Air:

Authorized by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), NAVOS Air specializes in the development and maintenance of non-Part 97 (special) satellite-based performance-based navigation (PBN) instrument flight procedures (IFPs), as well as Heliport Evaluation. With a mission to enhance safe access to terminal environments, off airport locations, and the National Airspace System, the company focuses on expanding opportunities for underserved and emerging aviation sectors. Leveraging their extensive background in military aviation, air ambulance services, airborne research, and Uncrewed Aircraft Systems (UAS) aviation and research, NAVOS Air approaches and conducts procedure development with the unique perspective of focused low-level flight operations experience. For more information, please visit <https://www.navosair.com>

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