

Ideas Competition

1/31/2026 draft

Cape Charles Harbor Development

The purpose of the Cape Charles Harbour Development Ideas Competition is to encourage Americans of all ages to develop innovative and creative ideas that provide vision to the master plan framework that is being developed for the harbor in historic Cape Charles, Virginia. Cape Charles is a typical American town on the Eastern Shore that grew out of the railroad and shipping industry along the Chesapeake Bay. Over time, the railroad has been replaced by a highway and the world's longest bridge tunnel at the southern tip of the Eastern Shore. As a result, Cape Charles went through a decline since it lost its economic engine. In 2020, Covid changed the way the world works, and this idyllic beach town on the Chesapeake Bay now draws professionals who can now work remotely on a full or part-time basis. The train tracks and buildings along the harbor have been removed, and the town is working with the Berkley Group to develop a master plan for a new development. This competition is intended to create ideas and test-fits for the master plan. The competition will spur public interest in this typical American town. It will join legacy and the future, historical context and contemporary thinking, and engage in a lively debate about how to shape railroad towns that no longer have a railroad.

eligibility

The competition invites participation of individuals 12 and older.

Submissions are welcome from everyone, including students, artists, critics, historians, educators, architects, landscape architects and anyone who has a good idea for this civic space.

calendar

Spring 2026 – Online RESOURCE materials about the site will be available to educate the public about the history of Cape Charles and this development opportunity.

September 30, 2026 – STAGE ONE submissions will be due to the Town of Cape Charles.

October 2026 – A distinguished jury composed of professors from the region's schools of architecture will select up to 25 semifinalists to enter stage two of the competition. All submissions will be on display at the Town Hall along with the master plan for the development. Recipients will be recognized at the town's October festival / date ???

Spring 2027 – In STAGE TWO, the semifinalists will translate their ideas into preliminary demonstration proposals. A jury will select 5 finalists.

Summer 2027 – In STAGE THREE, the five finalists will be asked to further refine their idea and make a presentation to the Town Council. They will develop their ideas into comparable test fits for the master plan, suitable for public vote.

October 2027: Cape Charles citizens will have the chance to vote for the People's Choice.

awards

All entrants will receive a certificate for their participation and will be eligible for inclusion in the catalogue that will be published and posted online at the conclusion of the Competition.

Each of the semifinalists from Stage One will receive a prize of \$100 plus a stipend if they choose to continue to Stage Two.

The 5 finalists from Stage Two will be awarded a stipend and offered free expert design and technical assistance to proceed to Stage 3.

In Stage Three, Cape Charles citizens will review the test fits and cast their vote for the People's Choice of 2 Honor Awards and three Honorable Mentions.

submissions

The Competition entrants must be registered in order to be eligible for review and award. Register by May 30, 2026 at _____.

Entries must be submitted electronically, using Adobe Portable Document format (PDF), by September 30, 2026 to Katie Nunez, Planning & Zoning Administrator, knunuez@capecharles.org (confirm with Katie as to who should receive)

Stage One submissions must be no more than a page size of 8 ½ x 11 inches. The submission must begin with an abstract of no more than 50 words. Minimum font size is 10 point. Only electronic submissions will be eligible.

Registration fee – Entries from individuals and teams are welcome.

- \$25 per entry for individuals
- \$10 per entry for students

Learn more at

www.capecharles.org