



November 11 , 2025

Honorable Council Members,

We, at Arts Enter and the LemonTree Gallery, would like to propose that the town of Cape Charles financially support Plein **Air Cape Charles** — a vibrant, open-air painting event that not only celebrates our natural beauty but also significantly benefits our local economy. We plan to coordinate with the 250<sup>th</sup> Sail Fest Celebration with the Plein Air organized on the same weekend, June 19-21.

Across the country, towns similar in size to ours have seen **remarkable tourism boosts** from such events. Visitors are drawn by the chance to watch artists at work, explore the area, and take home original art capturing our landscapes. These visitors **eat in our restaurants, stay in local inns, and shop in our stores**, creating a ripple effect of economic activity that extends well beyond the event weekend.

According to national arts impact studies, **cultural travelers spend up to 80% more** than the average tourist. Even a modest plein air event can attract hundreds of visitors and generate **tens of thousands of dollars** in local spending. The art created here also becomes a living **promotion for our town**—featured in galleries, social media posts, and collectors' homes across the region and beyond.

Beyond the financial return, the event builds community pride and enriches our cultural identity. It invites residents to connect with artists, participate in workshops, and experience our landscapes through fresh eyes.

The event can be self-sustaining and even profitable while strengthening our town's image as a **vibrant, creative, and welcoming destination**.

Supporting this initiative isn't just about art—it's a **strategic investment in tourism, local business, and community vitality**.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours in Art,

Clelia Cardano Sheppard

MaryAnn Roehm

## **1. Tourism Impact:**

- Plein air art festivals draw visitors who travel specifically for arts and cultural experiences.
- Visitors stay longer and spend more — on lodging, dining, and shopping — generating direct revenue for local businesses.
- Art tourists tend to be high-value travelers: they spend 60–80% more per trip than average tourists (according to Americans for the Arts and the U.S. Travel Association).

## **2. Economic Multiplier Effect:**

- Participating artists often come from out of town, booking accommodations, dining locally, and purchasing materials and services during their stay.
- Galleries, restaurants, and retail shops see increased foot traffic throughout the event and in the weeks following, as art buyers return or tell others about the town.

## **3. Cultural Branding and Visibility:**

- A plein air event positions the town as an arts destination — a brand that attracts visitors year-round.
- Images of local landscapes created by artists become lasting promotional material, circulating on social media, in art publications, and through sales to collectors who display “a piece of your town” in homes and galleries nationwide.

## **4. Community and Civic Benefits:**

- The event celebrates local beauty and heritage while fostering civic pride.
- Partnerships with local businesses, schools, and organizations create cross-promotion and sponsorship opportunities.
- Events like quick-paints, auctions, and artist meet-and-greets invite resident participation, strengthening community engagement.

## **5. Profitability and Sustainability:**

- Sponsorships, artist entry fees, art sales commissions, and auction proceeds can offset or exceed event costs.
- The long-term return comes from repeat tourism, expanded cultural reputation, and potential grants for the arts.

Thanks for for reviewing this suggestion and opportunity for Cape Charles.