



BOGOTA CREATIVE ARTS TEAM

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# CREATIVE PLACEMAKING PLAN

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2021-2026

Updated 2023

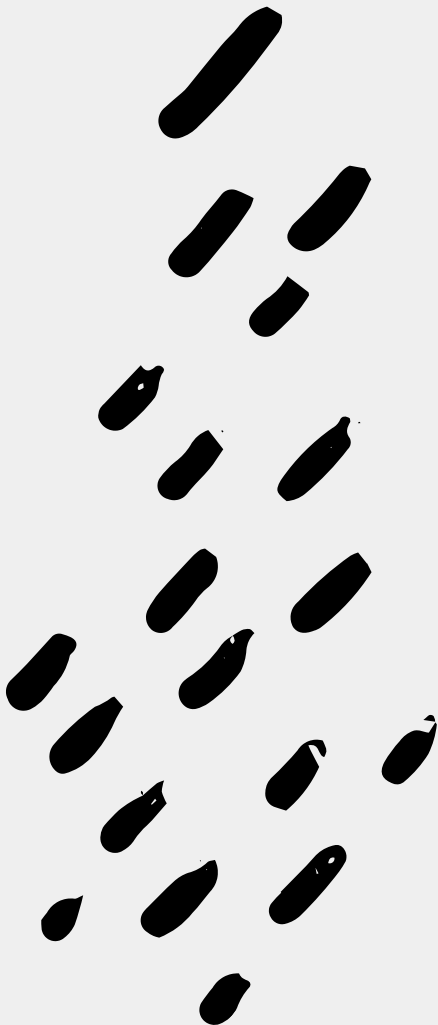


## INTRODUCTION

The Bogota Creative Arts Team (CAT) was established by the Borough of Bogota in 2020 to foster a vibrant arts and culture community, and to contribute to Bogota earning a Sustainable Jersey certification. It is a project of Bogota Beautiful, a community organization founded in 2013 that is committed to improving the quality of life for residents via beautification and improvement projects, and community building events.

CAT's initial objective was to identify and map creative assets and opportunities. Next, it undertook the task of developing this plan using community feedback and insights from its diverse team. An uncertain future during the COVID-19 pandemic make flexibility a priority with implementation. CAT will modify objectives when deemed necessary to accommodate unforeseen circumstances.

We are excited for this next chapter in Bogota's story, and invite you to join us in nurturing a vibrant creative and fine arts culture in the Borough.





## OUR MISSION

The Bogota Creative Arts Team nurtures a vibrant creative and fine arts culture within the Borough encompassing art, music, wellness and community building in accordance with Sustainable Jersey guidelines. Its goal is to establish a vision for the community to determine how arts, culture and the creative arts are harnessed to enhance the well-being of Bogota residents.

## OUR VISION

The Creative Arts Team will be the instrument for expanding the arts and creativity in Bogota to invigorate its community, culture, and economy.

## OUR VALUES

We are respectful of our neighbors and community. We encourage and empower creativity in all our doings. We identify, acknowledge, appreciate, enhance, and promote our cultural diversity and heritage.

We believe that Art and Creativity is a pathway to success and harmony



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Creative Arts Team could not exist without the volunteer and financial contributions from its members and partners.

## OUR TEAM

Amaru Bustamante (Bogota Beautiful)  
Sara Cassaro (Bogota Public Library)  
Jodie Wu, Secretary (Bogart Memorial Reformed Church)  
Daniele Fede, (Chair Environmental Commission, Green Team, Former Council Person)

Patricia Adriance (Educator)  
Bob Calleja (BHS Art Teacher, retired)  
Christine DeFazio (Artist)  
Eileen Fitzgerald (Educator & Gardener)  
Joseph Gallagher (Green Team member & Artist)  
Alexander Hernandez (VFW Post 5561)  
Lucy Lebron (Real estate and Healthcare professional)  
Anthony Lopez (Media Executive)  
Alex Rojas (High School Student)

## OUR PARTNERS

Borough Mayor & Council  
Borough Department of Public Works  
Borough Environmental Commission  
Borough Green Team  
Borough Recreation Commission  
Borough Rescue Squad

Bogart Memorial Reformed Church  
Bogota Beautiful  
Bogota Blog NJ  
Bogota Board of Education & Schools  
Bogota Public Library  
Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 5561

# ABOUT BOGOTA

The Borough of Bogota, New Jersey is home to an estimated 8,335 residents in Bergen County. Founded in 1894 and smaller than one square mile, Bogota has a history of deep community connections amid a burgeoning diversity. Here are some key characteristics of the Borough.



**18** arts and culture/wellness businesses in Bogota

## AGES

**19%** under 18

**69%** 25 to 64

**12%** over 65

## DIVERSITY

**33%** foreign born

**47.5%** speak a language other than English at home

**23%** identify as Black, Asian or other

**42%** identify as Latinx

## EDUCATION

**13%** enrolled in K-12

**29%** earned a Bachelors degree or higher

## HOUSING

**2,980** total housing units

**32%** renter-occupied

**34%** have a least one child in the household

## COMMUTE

**30%** commute to New York

**95%** work out of town

## INCOME

**\$83,517** annual household income

**7.6%** in poverty





## BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ARTS IN BOGOTA

From school plays and talent shows to art displays and community festivals, Bogota has a long history of celebrating arts and culture over its 125 years. CAT aims to instill a cohesiveness to arts and culture activities while expanding cooperation among its member organizations.

Here is a small list of the many activities that have taken place over the years:

- Borough 125th Anniversary Fence Weaving
- Bogota Day community festival
- VFW concerts, Veterans Day essay and speech contests
- Library art gallery, open mic night, craft programs and history lectures
- Bogota Beautiful pop-up art spaces and annual International Potluck Dinner
- Schools International Multicultural Nights
- Week of the Arts at elementary schools
- St. Joseph Church Fall food festival
- St. Joseph Academy Follies variety show
- Bogart Memorial Church Pottery studio
- Bogota High School plays, spring musicals, talent shows



Borough's 125th Anniversary Fence Weaving, 2019. Photo courtesy of Bogota Beautiful.



Olsen Park Environmental Walkway cleanup, 2019. Photo courtesy of Bogota Beautiful.

# COMMUNITY ANALYSIS

Focus groups, surveys and Facebook polls were used to gather community input to assist the team in analyzing the opportunities and challenges that exist in Bogota.

## FOCUS GROUPS

Three focus groups were conducted to collect community input. Despite low attendance in part due to the 2020 pandemic, insights gathered assisted in developing this plan. The audiences for the focus groups included the Bogota Council, its Environmental Commission and Green Team, and the Creative Arts Team. Overall, eleven community members provided feedback through concentrated discussion.

Overwhelmingly, the sense of community and location of Bogota received the highest accolades. Most focus group participants appreciated the small-town atmosphere that allows residents to feel an affinity to their town. Parents and those who grew up in Bogota also cited close connections as an advantage for raising kids in the Borough.

Participants were unanimous in agreeing that a major town strength is its proximity to New York City in one direction and the mountains in the other. Participants reflect on the changing culture of the Borough, one going as far as to label three different “castes”: old Bogotians, longtime

residents and recent arrivals. The conversation often focused on the need to improve inclusion and bring the various segments of the Borough together. With an influx of New Yorkers and renters, some lamented the Bogota of the past; others revered what they consider to be untapped potential to improve the community.

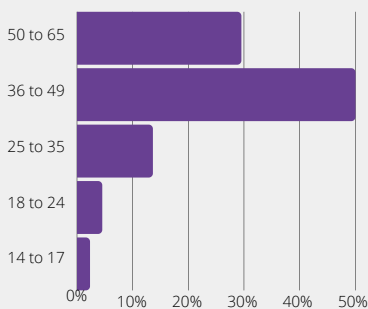
The most important knowledge gathered from the focus groups are the areas needing improvement. Many complaints have been on the radar for years, such as the high taxes, poor storefront aesthetic and little celebration of Bogota’s growing diversity. The 2020 pandemic brought additional issues to light, for instance the need for more usable outdoor space in parks and for outdoor dining. Without improvements in most of these areas, Bogota will continue to be a pass through town and not a destination as many would like it to be.

While the wish list collected from the focus groups is lengthy, much of the creativity and insightful ideas inform this plans objectives.

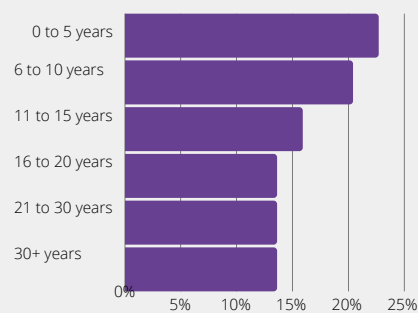
# SURVEYS

A survey in English and Spanish was conducted virtually from June through August 2020. Due to the pandemic and heightened screen fatigue, it was a difficult time to gather a high level of community participation in an online survey. The survey was also limited to those with computer or smartphone access, thereby inhibiting responses from many in Bogota's senior community and those on the wrong side of the digital divide. There were unfortunately no responses on the Spanish-language version, although some members of the Latinx community contributed to the 44 responses on the English survey.

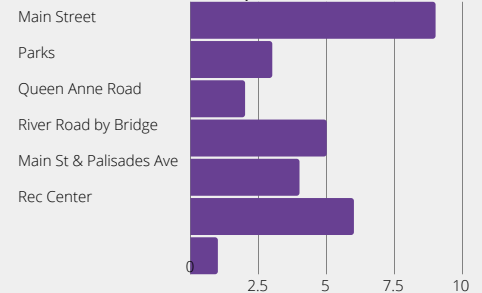
How old are you?



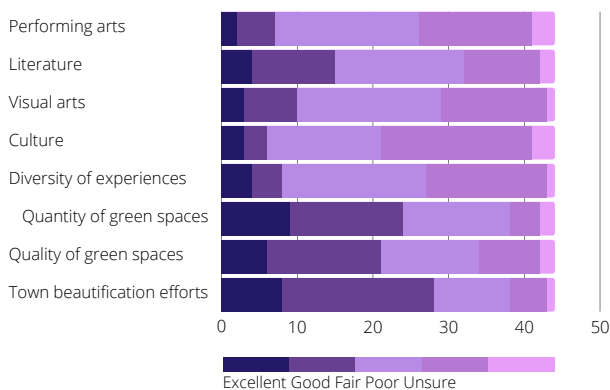
How long have you lived/worked in Bogota?



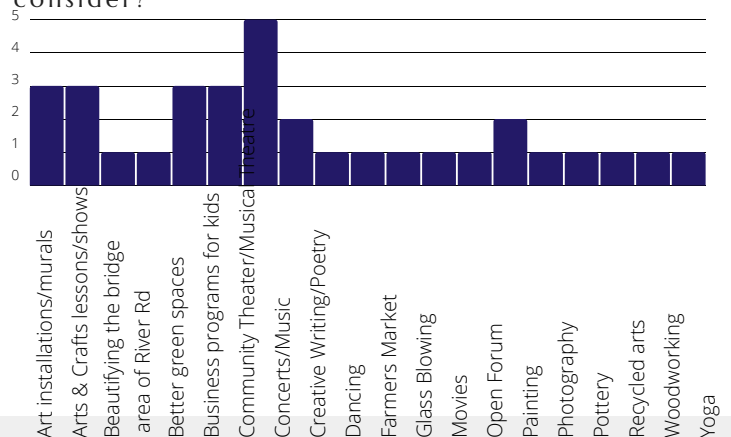
What one area should be improved aesthetically?



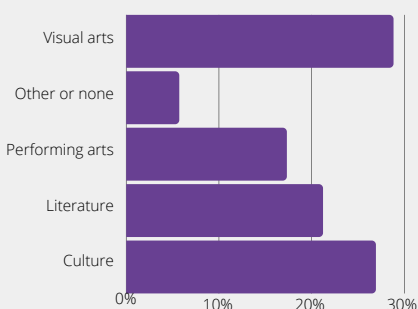
How would you rate Bogota for each of the following?



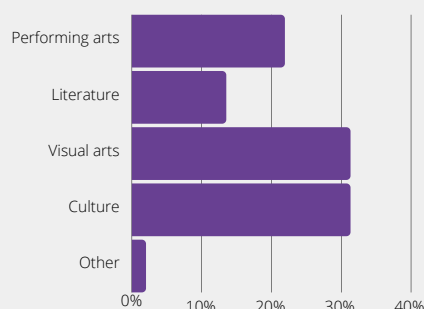
What community programs or projects would you like the Creative Arts Team to consider?



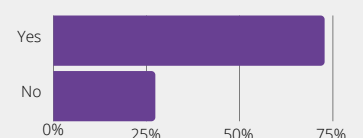
What arts and cultural activities do you currently participate in?



What arts and cultural activities would you like to have better access to participate in?



Are you interested in participating in virtual arts and culture activities?



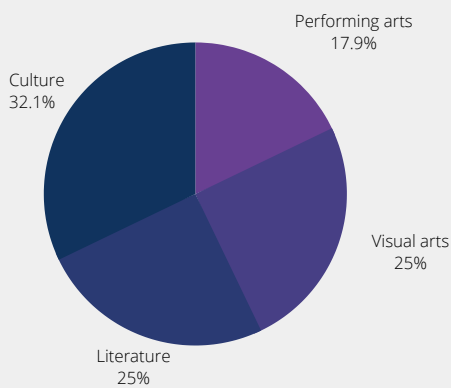




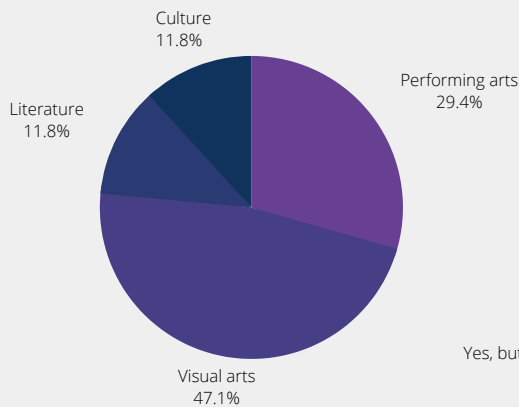
## FACEBOOK POLLS

A community Facebook group was used to survey those who are regularly vocal about the Borough. Five polls with invitations to provide additional feedback in the comments. The responses greatly aligned with the focus group and survey results.

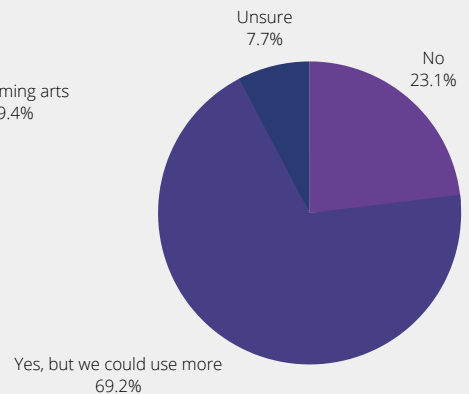
What arts and cultural activities do you currently participate in?



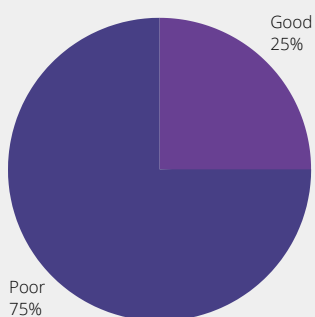
What arts and cultural activities would you like to have better access to participate in?



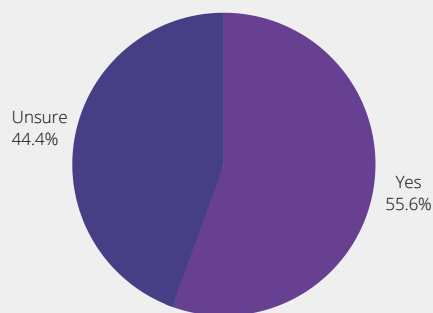
Do you see diversity in the current arts and cultural experiences in Bogota?



What is the quality of community green spaces in Bogota?



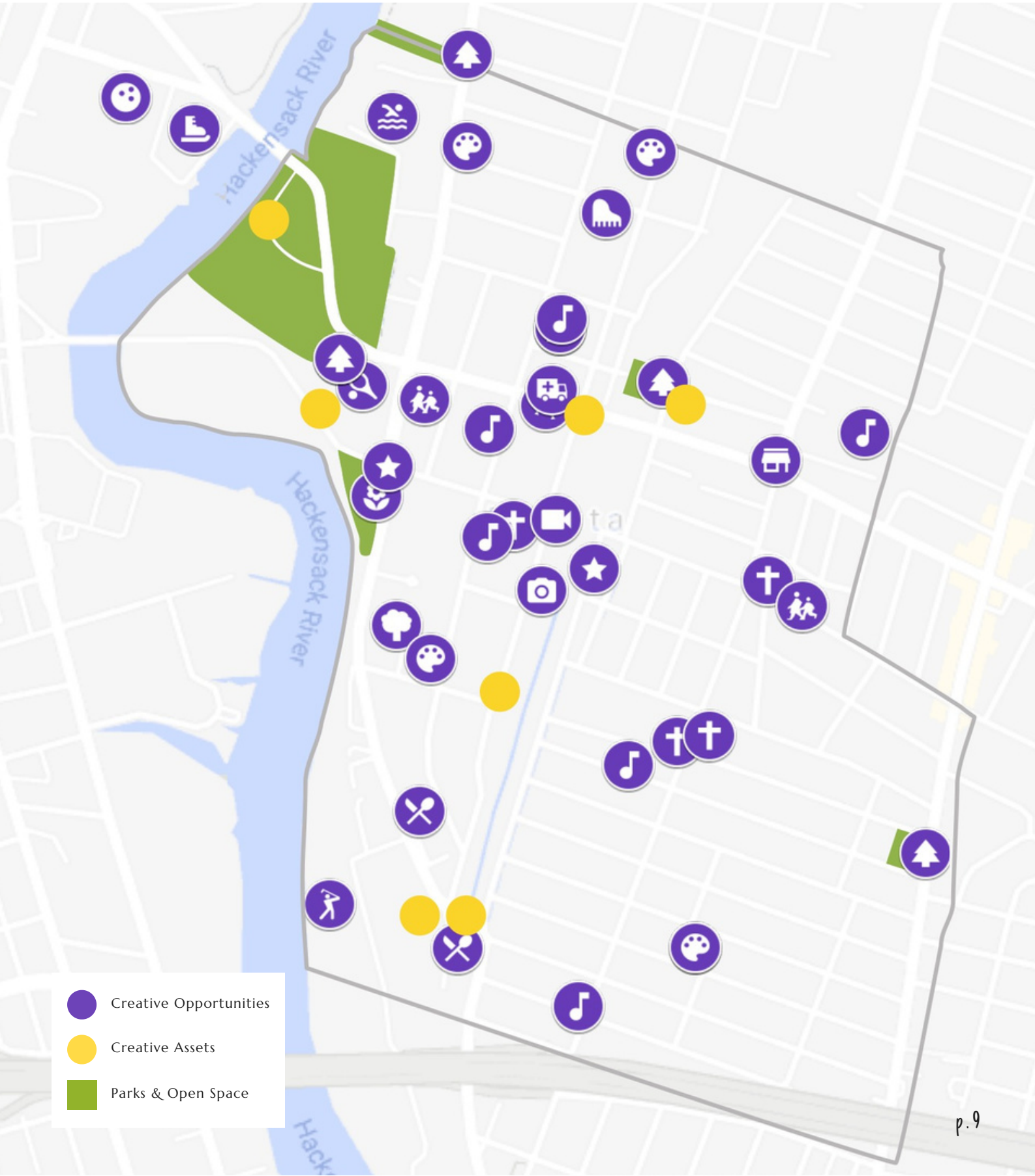
Do you feel some areas of town are neglected in terms of arts, cultural and beautification efforts?



# CREATIVE OPPORTUNITIES & ASSETS

The team has identified a variety of creative opportunities and assets that exist in Bogota. This map charts the locations of businesses, organizations and people in town that contribute to arts and culture, or have the capacity to help CAT achieve its vision.

This Asset Inventory is posted on the Borough Website:  
<https://www.bogotaonline.org/creative-arts-team-cat>





Bogota High School Jazz Band, Winter Concert 2019. Photo courtesy of Mazzway Photos LLC

## CREATIVE PLACEMAKING GOALS

Strategic goals were developed using the team's research. Each has measurables to encourage results. It is important to note that this plan will be reviewed on a biannual basis to remove objectives that are no longer practical and to add those that become necessary due to unforeseen circumstances. This is to ensure the plan continues to remain relevant to the community's needs and desires. Nonprofit fundraising and grants are integral to the success of the plan. The following goals are not listed in any particular order.

- 1 Make Bogota a destination and retain assets
- 2 Celebrate the performing arts, culture and diversity
- 3 Increase the aesthetic appeal of Bogota
- 4 Increase funding for sustainability of this plan



Bogota High School's production of A Fairy Tale Christmas Carol, 2018. Photo courtesy of Mazzway Photos LLC





# MAKE BOGOTA A DESTINATION

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## OBJECTIVE 1.1

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Attract local artists to regularly perform or exhibit in town

- The Creative Arts Team, in partnership with the Library and rec commission, will seek out local artists through various media to determine interest and availability. Constraints include funding, weather, venue and artist availability. Partnership with RP Arts Council and Creative Bergen

- Measuring Success:
- Host one annual outdoor and/or virtual art event by October 2023
  - Investigate opportunities to host open mic nights periodically by January 2024.

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## OBJECTIVE 1.3

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Encourage local businesses to expand their marketing efforts and provide education on resources to do so with a primary focus on Bogota's restaurant scene

- The Creative Arts Team will develop a digital restaurant guide which will be linked to the Bogota Creative Arts Team page on [www.bogotaonline.org](http://www.bogotaonline.org) Constraints include restaurant participation and changes to businesses.

Measuring Success:

- Sponsor virtual and/or in-person training opportunities by May 2024
- Digital and print version of restaurant guide will be available. Obtained grant to publish flyer with QR code.

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## OBJECTIVE 1.2

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Investigate availability of outdoor space for events and dining

- The Creative Arts Team will contact all available venues in town to determine public availability and capacity of each venue. Constraints include participation of venues.

Measuring Success:

- Create a guide detailing park usage opportunities for organizations and the public by June 2024
- Communicate outdoor dining opportunities and regulations to Bogota restaurants by April 2024

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## OBJECTIVE 1.4

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Alleviate parking frustrations for residents and visitors frequenting Bogota businesses

- The Borough will establish areas to be designated for parking. The Creative Arts Team in conjunction with the borough Police Department will develop a parking map. Constraints include availability of parking areas. Local churches and banks have provided parking.

Measuring Success:

- Investigate and endorse necessary parking limit adjustments near all business districts by December 2024
- Develop parking map for business districts by December 2025. Promote walkability and bikeability by December 2025



# CELEBRATE THE PERFORMING ARTS, CULTURE AND DIVERSITY

## OBJECTIVE 2.1

### Identify locations to host events

- The Creative Arts Team will contact all available venues in town to determine availability and capacity of each venue. Constraints include participation of venues.

#### Measuring Success:

- Create a guide detailing venue opportunities for organizations and the public by June 2023  
Postings on webpage and social media shares

## OBJECTIVE 2.2

### Establish an annual event promoting the diversity of Bogota

- The Creative Arts Team will establish an event centering on the multicultural food establishments in town. Constraints include participation of establishments

Partner with schools that have annual events

- Measuring Success:  
Launch the event by April 2024  
Increased library and community participation

## OBJECTIVE 2.3

### Work with the schools to build on already established efforts

- The Creative Arts Team will work in conjunction with the schools to incorporate visual and performing arts groups into Creative Arts Team events and projects Constraints include availability of student organizations.

#### Measuring Success:

- Contribute to at least one event at each amenable school annually, including but not limited to, decorating Rain Collection barrels at the Bogota Community Garden, by December 2023.  
Annual arbor day poster contest has taken place for 20 years

## OBJECTIVE 2.4

### Help sustain local artists and musicians

- The Creative Arts Team will work with festival and events coordinators to incorporate visual and performing arts within these events. Constraints include availability of artists and events.

#### Measuring Success:

- Provide opportunities for artists and musicians to participate in Bogota arts and cultural events through association with the Recreation Department and Ridgefield Park Arts Counsel, on a quarterly basis by December 2024

## OBJECTIVE 2.5

### Cultivate art walks and/or public art

- The Creative Arts Team will work with local artisans to display art in storefronts or other established locations. Constraints include availability of display space and artwork.

#### Measuring Success:

- Develop plans for temporary installations at least once annually by December 2025

# 3

## INCREASE THE AESTHETIC APPEAL OF BOGOTA

### OBJECTIVE 3.1

Encourage businesses to maintain their storefronts

- The Creative Arts Team will work with Borough officials to determine recommendations and expectations for upkeep of local businesses. Constraints include participation of businesses. Initiate a Business Recognition Program to acknowledge businesses that meet Code Enforcement criteria and implement sustainable business practices by December 2024
- Create recommendation guide for Bogota businesses by December 2024. Advocate for prompt response by the Code Enforcement Department for any businesses not in compliance beginning by December 2024.
- Track number of businesses that participate.
- Create trust fund from fines for public cleanup and art.

Measuring Success:

### OBJECTIVE 3.2

Invest in clean-up and beautification projects for unattractive and/or dilapidated areas

- The Creative Arts Team will work with Borough officials to determine recommendations and expectations for areas to beautify. Constraints include Borough participation and availability of funds. Bogota Beautiful and churches and youth groups to participate
- Research and create plans for one area each year beginning in 2024. Utilize existing Clean Communities funds for beautification projects. HS students volunteer for community service hours.

Measuring Success:



# 4

## SECURE FUNDING FOR SUSTAINABILITY OF THIS PLAN

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### OBJECTIVE 4.1

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#### Identify grant opportunities

- The Creative Arts Team will work with Borough officials and grants person to identify and apply for grants.  
Constraints include availability of grants.

Measuring Success:  
Identify grant opportunities and obtain grants for objectives beginning March 2024.  
Community Garden grant awarded 2023.

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### OBJECTIVE 4.2

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#### Identify top funding needs requiring Borough financial support

- The Creative Arts Team will work with Borough officials to identify events and obtain financial support. Constraints include availability of funds.

Measuring Success:  
• Finalize needs prior to the annual Council budget meeting beginning in 2024  
Leverage with rec public events budget and Ridgefield Arts Council funding.

