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I have learned with great interest of the La Reunion TX Flora Street Lofts Project and hope to see it executed. From an urban and an economic perspective, this kind of project, which will bring both residential and arts production to the Dallas Arts District, is crucial to the Districts ongoing evolution and success as a true neighborhood and as a cultural center.

Frequently overlooked in urban development involving arts and cultural institutions is the need for arts production and not just arts consumption. Experience with how artistic works are produced and interaction with those who make them is both a lively urban experience and essential for truly understanding the end result. As the late architecture critic David Dillon perceptively wrote "what is glaringly absent [from the Arts District] are the elements that would make the district a true civic showcase where art meets every day life..." The Arts District as a concept will only be fully realized when it is a destination for the broadest range of social and cultural experiences possible, including the vibrant "life of the street" that an artists' complex would contribute to.

From a more pragmatic economic perspective, the urban analyst Richard Florida, author of *The Creative Class*, in a recent study conducted for UT Arlington assessed the DFW region as having an arts community approximately 26% smaller than the US population average and actually decreasing yearly. As is well known, Florida considers creative talent as a key component for the success of cities and a key competitive advantage. Dallas is clearly emerging as a global economic and cultural center; the expansion of arts community through projects such as the Flora Lofts will inevitably contribute to the region's advancement on all fronts.

Best regards,

Don Gatzke, AIA  
Dean