



# PILLARS

LEADERSHIP TRAINING PROGRAM

**2017–2018 REVIEW**



**AIA**  
Kansas City



## 2017 PILLARS CLASS

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## ABOUT PILLARS

The Pillars Leadership Training Program of the American Institute of Architects Kansas City prepares a representative cross section of the chapter's emerging leaders and individuals from the building community for their role in shaping the future of both the architectural profession and the greater Kansas City metropolitan area. The training program includes active participation in programs and exposure to community leaders and issues. Each class spends their time exploring core issues that affect our profession and the region within which we practice. Through discussions with leaders and colleagues, dialogue among themselves, tours and research the group will be able to understand and present to the AIA as a whole how we can make a positive change within our community. The AIA Kansas City Pillars program is a nationally recognized program for its originality and depth and has inspired similar AIA leadership studies in other US cities. The program continues to raise the bar of what young professionals want out of their profession and how we as professionals can make an impact on our built environment.



*First Group Photo*



*Tour of Boys Grow*

## OCTOBER & NOVEMBER

Over the past two months, the Pillars class explored the local food and beverage industry of Kansas City. The October session focused on locally sourced food and its significance to the community, while the November session looked at how locally crafted beverages affected development and growth in their communities. The class met with various leaders in the urban farming and craft brewery industries to better understand the growth, development, and impact of these industries.

In October, the class started with a tour of Boys Grow with founder John Gordon and his staff. The class learned the mission of Boys Grow and saw the farm as it transitions into the winter season. After, we traveled to KCK to Cultivate KC's Juniper Gardens Training Farm, and toured the farm with Public Education Coordinator, Taylor Westfall, and Tammy Dodderidge. Here, we learned about how the organization teaches urban farming to refugees to acclimate them to their new lives. The session ended with a panel discussion with Vladimir Mitton and Jennifer Marsh of Cultivate KC where the class learned about the challenges and advantages of urban farming and how urban farming can affect the lives of everyone around it. The class also learned where that food goes whether it be farmers' markets, restaurants, or grocers.

In November, the class began the session at Dean Realty with Jeremiah Dean, and a history of Imperial Brewery. The class then travelled to the Imperial Brewery for a brief tour

of the grounds and surrounding property. After, the class participated in a charrette and discussion with Dean Realty, Keith Thompson (Brewery Emperial), and Will and Chrissy Reece and Carl Jacobus (Miami Creek Brewery) on why breweries spur development and the relationship of breweries to each other. The class divided into five teams and looked at the land around the brewery and what it could become to initiate development of the old Imperial Brewery building and create a "Cambridge District" of Kansas City. With the help of the guest speakers, the groups reconvened at the end with various site plans, vignettes, diagrams, and guidelines for the area.

These two sessions gave the class insight into how the food and beverage industry affects the community and the support system they have for one another. Both industries have created a presence here in Kansas City that allows them to thrive. The class now has an idea of how much these industries are supporting Kansas City culture and creating a future for others to come in and do the same without immediate competition. These industries work together to create Kansas City district identities and separation in a fairly widespread city.



*Builders' Association Tour*

## DECEMBER & JANUARY

As designers, architects, engineers, and contractors, we all undergo a good deal of education and training to advance in our fields. This training allows us to be leaders in the industry; as designers of communities, projects both large and small, job captains coordinating and directing multiple trades.

There is another equally important component to the execution of our designs and projects, one that is often overlooked. Our projects cannot be successful without the skilled tradesmen and women that are on the jobsite day in and day out, working with their hands to implement our designs. This aspect of our industry offers competitive wage opportunities without the requirement of a college education, and oftentimes with paid training programs. The reality is that skilled trade laborers go into jobs straight out of school with sufficient, competitive salaries; jobs that can span an entire career. All with relatively little upfront cost and training.

However, after the 2008 recession, it has become increasingly difficult to secure, train, and maintain a skilled trade labor base. Time and time again, we hear about the shortage of skilled masons, carpenters, and builders. As a result, the vitality and longevity of the skilled trades moving forward is a major concern.

With session one, we began with an overview of the skilled labor market; past, present, and future. This took place at the Builders' Association Training Center in North Kansas City.



*Pillars work with Urban Rangers on a bridge building exercise*

Presentations and discussions were held with Don Hunt, Training Director of the Bricklayers & Allied Craftworkers Union, and Dr. Richard Bruce, Builders' Association Education & Training Director. Pillars also participated in a short crash course in brick laying.

In this session, we discovered the opportunities and challenges that organizations like the Builders' Association face to maintain and recruit a skilled work force. We also discussed the importance and difference between a traditional college education, that many students are pushed towards from an early age, and the oftentimes much more lucrative and beneficial vocational or trade school education.

Session Five expanded the topic to focus on community support programs that mentor youth in the Greater Kansas City Area, and shifted our focus towards programs like the Urban Ranger Corps and the ACE Mentoring Program, both local programs that work regularly with Kansas City youth.

Scott Rice Office Works hosted the session, with Andrew Lack and Scott Jones representing the ACE Mentoring Program and Erik Dickinson and Lynn Johnson with the Urban Ranger Corps. Pillars also had the opportunity to work with several Urban Rangers youth, who came in for a tour and bridge building exercise, which highlighted the importance of coordination and clear documentation of designs to convey design intent to the builders.



*7540 Washington Apartments Tour*



*Kansas City Crime Lab Tour*

## FEBRUARY & MARCH

In February, Kansas City Pillars looked at the issue of housing and homelessness. Unsurprisingly, this issue is not as simple as finding shelter for people. It branches into topics of mental health, substance abuse, and crime and safety. To better understand these issues, the group had to dig into these tough topics and better understand the resources Kansas City has to offer to alleviate these problems.

Our first stop was reDiscover Transitional Living Program, located at 75th and Wornall. These new apartments, designed by local architects El Dorado, house young adults transitioning out of foster care, with an emphasis on individuals with a mental health diagnosis or substance abuse problems. Counseling services are conducted on site. We heard from the operators, and learned of the design process, which had interesting challenges such as community resistance and designing for a unique user group.

The group then moved to the new Veterans Community Project, which recently opened the first thirteen of their “village” of tiny homes. These houses provide living space for men and women who formerly served in the armed forces. In addition, there are additional mental health and community building services available on site. The leaders of this organization showed a strong passion for helping the Veteran community, and had quite a few inspirational stories for the group.

While the February session touched on the issue of crime and safety, the March session dove deeper to take a closer look. In this session we visited the Kansas City Police Department East Patrol and Crime Lab and the Urban Neighborhood Initiative. Although these two groups have different mission statements, they have one thing in common: the safety and well-being of neighborhood constituents in east Kansas City.

The Kansas City Police Department East Patrol Campus was recently built with the intention of being a spark of redevelopment for the community it serves. Pillars learned of the unorthodox development of this site, which included the abatement and tear down of over 90 vacant properties in order to place this in one of the most crime-prone zip codes in Kansas City. Various officers shared their experiences from being part of the police force, and spoke to their view on the changing nature crime in the East Patrol district.

After a tour of the station and crime lab, the group headed to the headquarters of the non-profit Urban Neighborhood Initiative. This organization was established to revitalize neighborhoods in a target area of Kansas City’s urban core – which shares most of its area with the East Patrol zone. They focus on safety, prosperity, and education. They discussed various strategies, based on research and successful tested approaches elsewhere, they are trying to implement in order to bring revitalization to this area.



*Project on the history of transportation*



*Pillars on the Pedal Hopper Tour*

## APRIL & MAY

The April session of Pillars was the first of two sessions dealing with transportation in Kansas City. The emphasis of this session was on the historical development of various transportation systems and current transportation issues.

To kick things off, the class had lunch at Spokes Café | Cyclery and learned about a unique space allowing diners and cyclists to interact with one another. Next the class moved to HNTB where they heard two presentations about the history of transportation in Kansas City.

The first presenter was Cydney Millstein with Architectural & Historical Research. Her presentation focused on mass transit in Kansas City. The street car system was a large part of this presentation. Next Michael Wells, historian at the Kansas City Library, presented on the massive construction of the downtown highway loop, which extended multiple decades.

The class then walked along the west side of the downtown loop, stopping at the Lewis and Clark Park at the Northwest Corner. This allowed the class to discuss the condition of the Case Park and the effect that the highway has had on economic development and connectivity.

The class arrived at the Mid America Regional Council (MARC) office to have a panel discussion on current

transportation issues. The panel included Eric Bunch, BikeWalkKC Policy Director, Ron Achelpohl, Director of MARC's Transportation and Environmental Department, and Shawn Strate, Planning Manager at KCATA.

The May session focused on the future of transportation in Kansas City. We began with a presentation by Tim Sylvester, founder and CEO of Integrated Roadways. His company focuses on embedding technology into pavement systems to provide a digital network of collecting data and generating revenue through the street system. His presentation also focused on how much street improvements are currently needed, the massive amount of street replacement/improvements needed, and the incredibly small budget the government has allocated for such needs.

Following the presentation, the group toured the MINDDRIVE facility. The program allows less fortunate students to receive unique hands-on experience building and renovating electric cars, classic cars, and much more. This provided us an inside view of a very successful community outreach program geared towards STEM initiatives.

To conclude the transportation sessions, we decided to explore the crossroads neighborhood on a very unique transportation system – the Pedal Hopper. We traveled to various local establishments while learning more about Kansas City transportation with a very fun game of trivia.