



PILLARS

LEADERSHIP TRAINING PROGRAM

2025-2026 REVIEW





2025 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.



Panelists discuss transportation and infrastructure around KC. Pictured: Michael Shaw, Olivia English, and Greg Bolon.



Pillars tour the KC Streetcar Authority's maintenance facility. Pictured: Brushy

DECEMBER: TRANSPORTATION IN KANSAS CITY

In December, the Pillars had the opportunity to learn about the undervalued core of Kansas City: infrastructure and transportation. Starting off the day with an exciting (and competitive) game of transportation trivia, the group got to test their background knowledge against subject matter experts. The Pillars then got to hear from a panel of three KC transportation professionals: Michael Shaw - the assistant director for the Kansas City Department of Public Works, Greg Bolon - the district engineer for MoDOT, and Olivia English - the founder of LiveGreenUSA. Each gave a brief presentation over how our roads are created, maintained, and funded. The Pillars learned how transportation projects can impact local communities; both positively to serve a growing demand and also the struggles of dividing neighborhoods with large highways. The presenters also touched on sustainability practices that are being implemented around Kansas City - including how local trash is being recycled into roads.

After the presentations and panel concluded, the Pillars braved the cold and utilized the streetcar route to travel to their next destination. The group then had the opportunity to meet with Lauren Krutty, the planning and operations director for the Kansas City Streetcar Authority. Lauren highlighted the excitement and growth surrounding the streetcar, especially on the heels of the opening of the Main Street extension. She shared insight into some of the logistics of operations, the analytics behind the growth strategies, and how they are

preparing for the influx of people for the World Cup. Since Kansas City was once home to the third largest streetcar network in the early 1900s, it was exciting to see the return to our roots. After the presentation and a quick safety briefing, the Pillars threw on some orange safety vests and were taken on a tour of the streetcar maintenance facility. We got to see the maintenance process with the use of lifts and machines for both new and repaired vehicles, the required safety measures for employees, and how the streetcars are wrapped with different designs and advertisements. At the end, we even snapped a photo with Brushy (the friendly neighborhood snow-clearing machine).



Pillars take the opportunity to explore the different transportation methods around Kansas City by using the streetcar to travel to their next destination.