



PILLARS

LEADERSHIP TRAINING PROGRAM

2020–2021 REVIEW



AIA
Kansas City



2021 PILLARS CLASS

Jake Brannon - Gould Evans

Ashlee Deck - ACI Boland

Andrew Fabin - RMTA

Trevor Freeman - Pulse Design Group

Harriet Grindel - SFS Architecture

Mackenzie Koepke - New Horizons LLC

Michael Kopper - Turner Construction

Annie Merrill - HOK

Tim Ockinga - JE Dunn

Kevin Pearson - Smith and Boucher

Chris Penland - Studio Build

Dan Pierce - GLMV Architecture

Jessica Reed-Shultz - Finkle + Williams Architects

Mike Schwaller - Helix Architecture + Design

Allison Wonder - The Clark Enersen Partners

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.



Bike Route highlighting KC's new Complete Streets ordinance.



Our team did a test run of the route utilizing KC's RideKC public bikes.

OCTOBER SESSION - INFRASTRUCTURE

From Kansas City's founding in 1850, its urban fabric has been molded by its transportation networks. Streets and neighborhoods that were once centered around pedestrians and public transit eventually gave way to multi-lane highways, surface parking lots and urban sprawl. The effects of a car-centric culture have been felt heavily in Kansas City and other metropolitan areas like it across the country. In recent years a push to return to the multi-modal networks of the past has gained traction, often with cycling being at the forefront.

In 2019, Kansas City, Missouri put the Bike KC Master Plan into place. This new plan comes at a time when the city is making significant investments in its future. The Bike KC Master Plan looks to continue this momentum by recommending progressive approaches to bicycling infrastructure improvements and programs, while also acknowledging the pragmatic realities of fiscal constraint, maintenance needs, and the size of the City.

Our October planning session was planned as 3 mile bike tour of the newly constructed "Complete Streets" along the Gillham corridor in Midtown Kansas City. Unfortunately due to steady rain all day, our session was moved to the safety of the AIA KC office. However the rain did not impede our board of presenters.

Michael Kelley from BikeWalkKC started our presentations for the day. Michael gave us an overview of the history of BikeWalk as well as their recent successful campaign for a Complete Streets ordinance in Kansas City. Our discussion focused on how these public transit corridors are designed, as well as some of the challenges associated with bicycle infrastructure.

Councilman Eric Bunch kicked off our second presentation. As well as being the Fourth District Councilman, Eric is a co-founder of BikeWalkKC and has served four years as Mayor Sly James appointee to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee. Our discussion focused on how public transit initiatives are enacted at a government level, as well as how the sprawl and racial dividing lines of our city often affect the financing and approval of these initiatives.

Elizabeth Bejan and Sam Swearngin ended our day with a presentation on their mission with the Revolve KC bicycle shop. Bejan, stated, "I think a bike shop is the perfect place to make a difference in the community". It was apparent that Revolve KC is part bike shop and part community pillar for the neighborhood surrounding 51st. and Troost. Our discussion led to how the bicycle is a necessary means of transportation for less affluent communities and the importance to maintain and develop this infrastructure.