



PILLARS

LEADERSHIP TRAINING PROGRAM

2024-2025 REVIEW



2024-25 PILLARS CLASS

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Clair Ryan, AIA - Black & Veatch

Tanvi Sanghvi, AIA - Helix

Keegan Thompson, AIA - DLR Group

Melissa Waton, Assoc. AIA - HOK

Kathryn Eckhoff - PE - Wallace Design Collective

Travis Kingsley - PE - 5BY5 Engineers

Kate Moeder - IA, NCIDQ - Hufft

Wesley Morris - PE, RCDD - Garver

Zach Russel - PE - PMA Engineering

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.



Pillars group photo on the rooftop of Cosentino's



Presentation by Meredith Hoenes from Port KC

APRIL

For the April session of Pillars, participants explored the powerful role transportation plays in shaping Kansas City's growth, economy, and urban landscape. The event kicked off with an outdoor lunch, overlooking the iconic Union Station, a historic hub of rail travel and the current southern terminus of the KC Streetcar, now poised for expansion. The setting underscored the session's focus: the intersection of legacy infrastructure and forward-looking transit initiatives.

From there, the Pillars visited the Kansas City Area Development Council's office and heard from Ashley McDonald about the impact of KCADC and Global Design. Tom Gerend from the Kansas City Streetcar Authority and Martin Rivarola from Mid America Regional Council shared insights into the revitalization of public transit in the city. Their stories connected the city's past as a rail hub to its present-day transit evolution, offering a compelling look at how modern infrastructure is reshaping mobility.

The group then boarded the KC Streetcar for a ride to Cosentino's Downtown Market where grocery industry leaders shared behind-the-scenes insights on food logistics in a dense urban setting. John Schweiger from BRR Architecture and David Michael from Cosentino's shared unique solutions to the design problems presented by the project, and they discussed the complex logistics of urban

food distribution, emphasizing the critical role transportation plays in getting fresh products to city residents and sustaining local business.

Next, the group traveled to the River Market, an area with deep historical roots in trade and a focus for future expansion. Meredith Hoenes from PortKC and Christopher Cline from Confluence Landscape Architecture provided an in-depth look at the area's waterfront revitalization efforts and the role of urban planning in shaping how people, goods, and services move through critical city sectors.

The group then rode by Streetcar back to Union Station to wrap up the session with a Happy Hour at Pierpont's. This session gave Pillars attendees a valuable understanding of how transportation is a key driver in connecting people and businesses and how thoughtful leadership can transform Kansas City into a more integrated and thriving city.