



PILLARS

LEADERSHIP TRAINING PROGRAM

2023-2024 REVIEW





2024 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.



The Pillars group in front of the Rock Island Bridge



Pillars learning about the Greenline from Steve McDowell

MARCH: PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

In March, the Pillars group explored the subjects of planning and development. The session started with a panel of city leaders, including Bill Dietrich with the Downtown Council; Councilman Jonathan Duncan, 6th district; Joe Perry with PortKC; and Jeff Williams, City Planner. This group represented different city stakeholders like planners (KCMO), developers (PortKC), users (Councilman representing people in the city), and a unifying group (Downtown Council of Kansas City). The group discussed long-range planning for the city, and how an organizing document like the 2030 Imagine Downtown Kansas City plan came to be. How does a city balance commerce and tourism with the needs and wants of its residents? How do we maintain progress while preserving attainability? We discussed housing, equity, amenities, and community, and how all these factors combine to create a master plan for the city.

The next stop was Hy-Vee arena, where Steve McDowell with BNIM gave a short presentation on the Greenline. What started as an idea shared between colleagues while on a walk has transpired into a grand plan: to unite the city. The Greenline aims to connect 10 miles of trails across the city and create a walkable and bike-able loop to connect neighborhoods and encourage community. During the presentation, we discussed similar initiatives nationwide and how they positively or negatively affected the surrounding community. We explored topics of the Kansas City Greenline

such as fundraising, branding, marketing, and collaboration of the many entities required to bring such a vision to life.

The Rock Island Bridge will serve as one of the many trailheads that will comprise the Greenline and was the final stop for the session. Michael Zeller with Flying Truss gave the group a tour of the construction site for the Rock Island Bridge. He shared how the idea evolved from “Chicken on a Bridge” to the elaborate project as it is known today: a floating trailhead that will include catered-style food-service restaurant, bar, event venue, and more! We discussed some of the challenges and benefits of retrofitting bridges into entertainment venues, and how to deal with things such as safety, utilities, and security of patrons once the project opens.



Michael Zeller showing the amenities that will be on the Rock Island Bridge.