Lakewood wins top ULI award for W line, 40 West Arts efforts

April 7, 2017 – Lakewood’s years of collaborative work with residents, businesses and others to transform the West Colfax Avenue corridor and to benefit from the W line has earned it the first-ever Impact Award given in the “Inspire” category by the Urban Land Institute of Colorado.

The Impact Award is like the Oscars™ for land-use, planning and development work, and it recognizes outstanding projects, related programs and visionaries in urban development. The first-ever “Inspire” category identified the project that has inspired the community and has a lasting impact in the public realm. Learn more at colorado.uli.org/impact-awards.

Lakewood won for applying ULI’s best practices to transform an auto-centric, suburban community into a walkable and healthy neighborhood in northeast Lakewood. The work helped create the 40 West Arts District, numerous events and festivals, the ARTLINE art route and new housing and commercial development. This is bringing a new vitality and new momentum to northeast Lakewood and the West Colfax Corridor for the first time in a generation, reversing the long decline of what had been Lakewood’s “main street.”

“What I love the most about what we’ve done along West Colfax and the W line is that we are bringing the arts to all walks of life and incomes,” said Mayor Adam Paul. “We are proud of what is happening in this corridor, and it is having a real impact in making this a thriving area of Lakewood.”

The city’s collaborative efforts have included using a $110,000 federal grant to work with residents, businesses and the Rocky Mountain College of Art + Design to launch the 40 West Arts District, one of 18 state certified creative districts in Colorado, that is now home to studios, galleries, a performing arts theater, the popular MuralFest and a farmers’ market. The city also created the Lamar Station Area Plan with community members, opening the way for new residences, live-work options, art studios and more. Other grants have been used to match city funds to create new streetscapes, public art and traffic-calming measures, making it easy and attractive to reach 40 West from the Lamar Station. Lastly, another $100,000 from a National Endowment for the Arts grant is helping to create the first phase of the ARTLINE, a new community-envisioned walking and bicycling art experience marked by innovative art that will open the summer of 2018. Since 2012, sales tax collections and jobs created in the area have blossomed, making it a successful business and economic model.