CLIMATE ACTION COLLABORATIVE | Walking Mountains

1994 - 2024 30 Years of IMPACT

CORE
Community Office for Resource Efficiency

Regional Code Collaboration: A Brief History and Look Forward

December 2025

AspenCORE.org

What's Inside

Who is this guide for?

We encourage you to share this presentation with **local government staff, elected officials, and any other stakeholders** who would benefit from learning about our region's recent and planned collaborative building code initiatives.

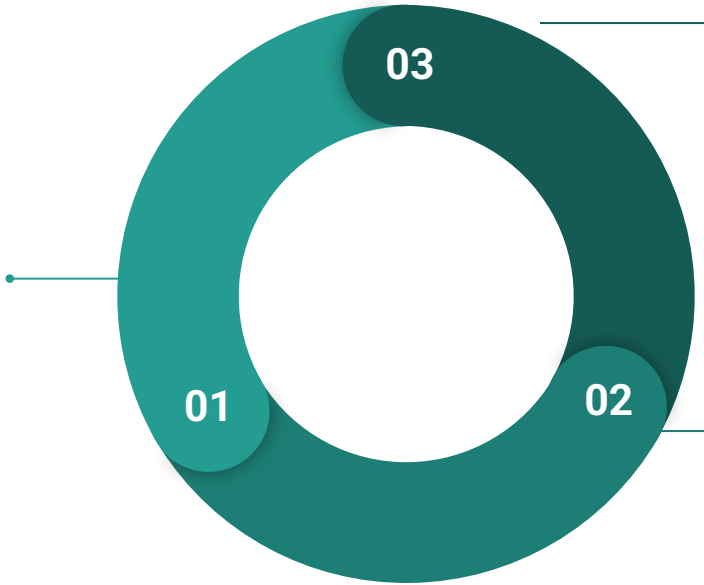
Why Energy Code Collaboration?

- Colorado is a home rule state, meaning jurisdictions, by and large, can adopt their own building codes.
- Flexibility can be great, but has led to wide inconsistencies in energy code standards.
- Inconsistencies can create challenges regarding code compliance, building safety & efficiency, and workforce development.

Collaborating on Code Adoption Leads to...

More efficiency

Financial savings from shared learning and training, fewer mistakes during construction, easier permitting and inspection process



Code Consistency

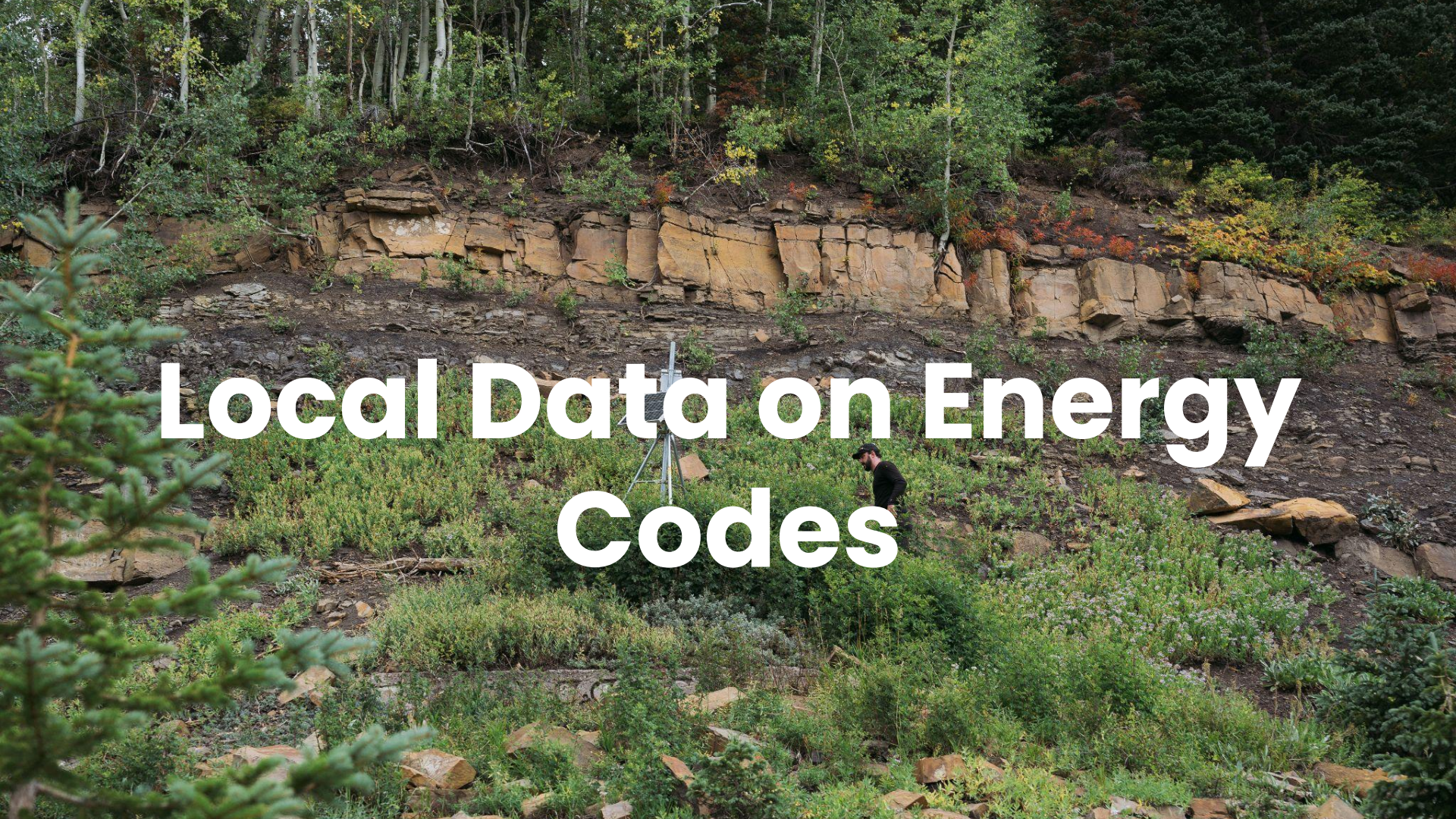
Minor variations between jurisdictions; rural areas tend to share a workforce across a large region

Better Code Compliance

A well-trained workforce; predictability on the job

Furthermore, our region has shared climate action goals:

Community	Climate Action/Sustainability Goal or Pledge
Eagle County, Vail, Avon, Minturn, Basalt, Red Cliff	Reduce Eagle County greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by **50%** by **2030**, **80% by 2050.**
Town of Eagle	Achieve **net zero** emissions in the Eagle community by 2030.
Pitkin County	Reduce annual GHG emissions by **90%** from 2020 levels by **2050.**
Aspen	Reduce GHG emissions by **63.4% by 2030** and **100% by 2050**.
Snowmass Village	Reduce GHG emissions by **62.5% by 2030** and **net zero by 2050.**
Garfield Clean Energy	Reduce electric supply GHG emissions by **100% by 2030,** and GHG emissions related to natural gas usage by **10% by 2030**.
Carbondale	Become a **net zero** community by **2050**.
Basalt, Pitkin County, Aspen	**Declared a climate emergency.**



Local Data on Energy Codes

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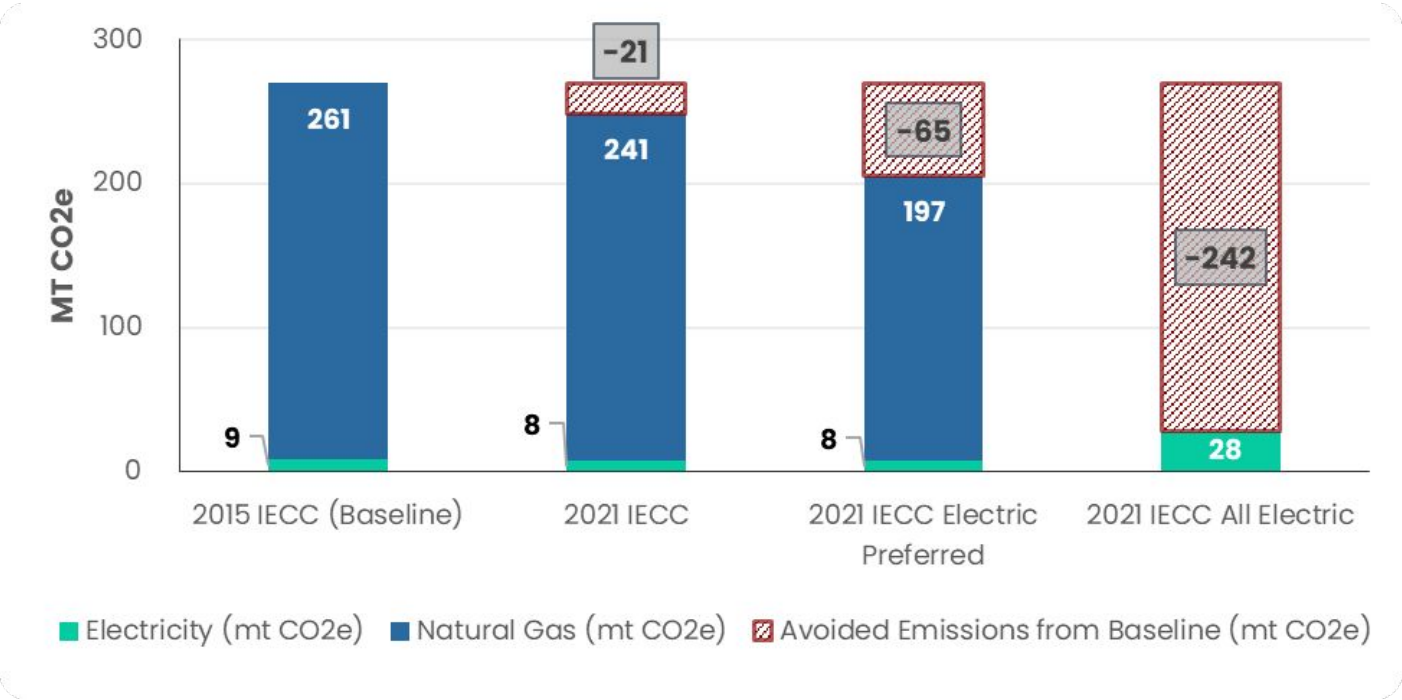
Comparing the 2015 IECC to the 2021 IECC

A study conducted by Lotus Engineering and Sustainability for Eagle County in 2022 analyzed new construction codes with electrification amendments to provide energy use and cost data. The code packages were evaluated by:

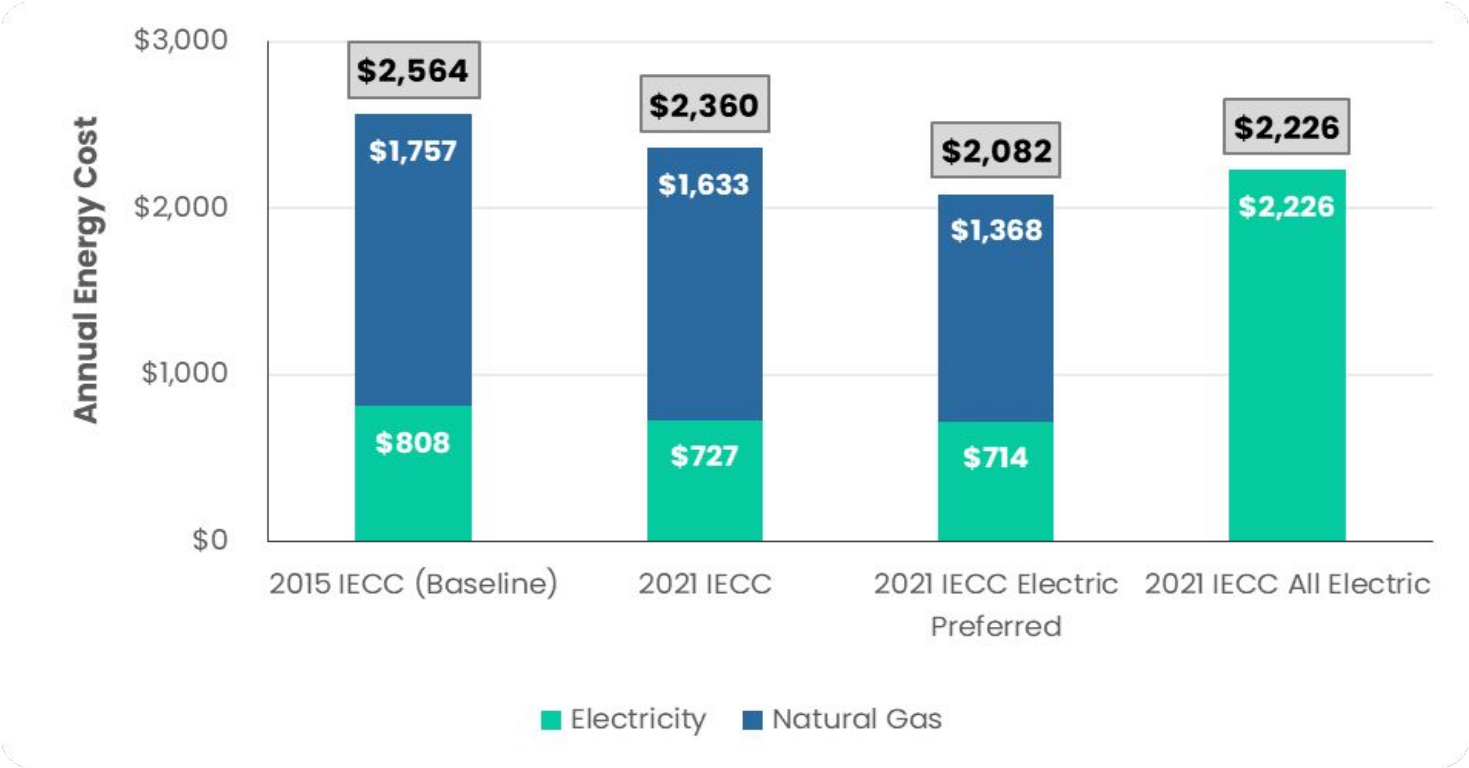
1. Upfront costs
2. Building lifetime GHG impacts
3. Operational lifetime cost impacts

Eagle County Energy Code Modeling Report, Nov 2022

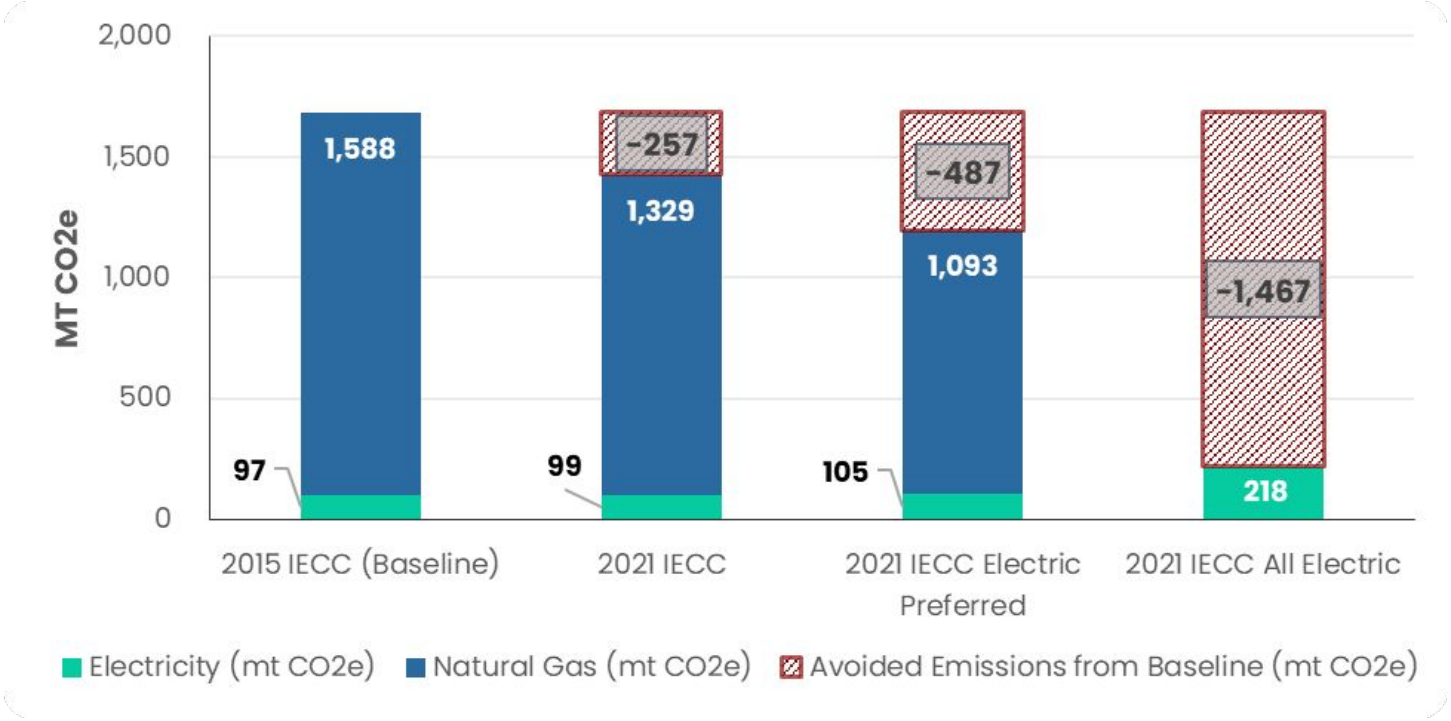
Findings: Single-Family Home GHG Emissions - 2015 IECC vs. 2021 IECC All-Electric



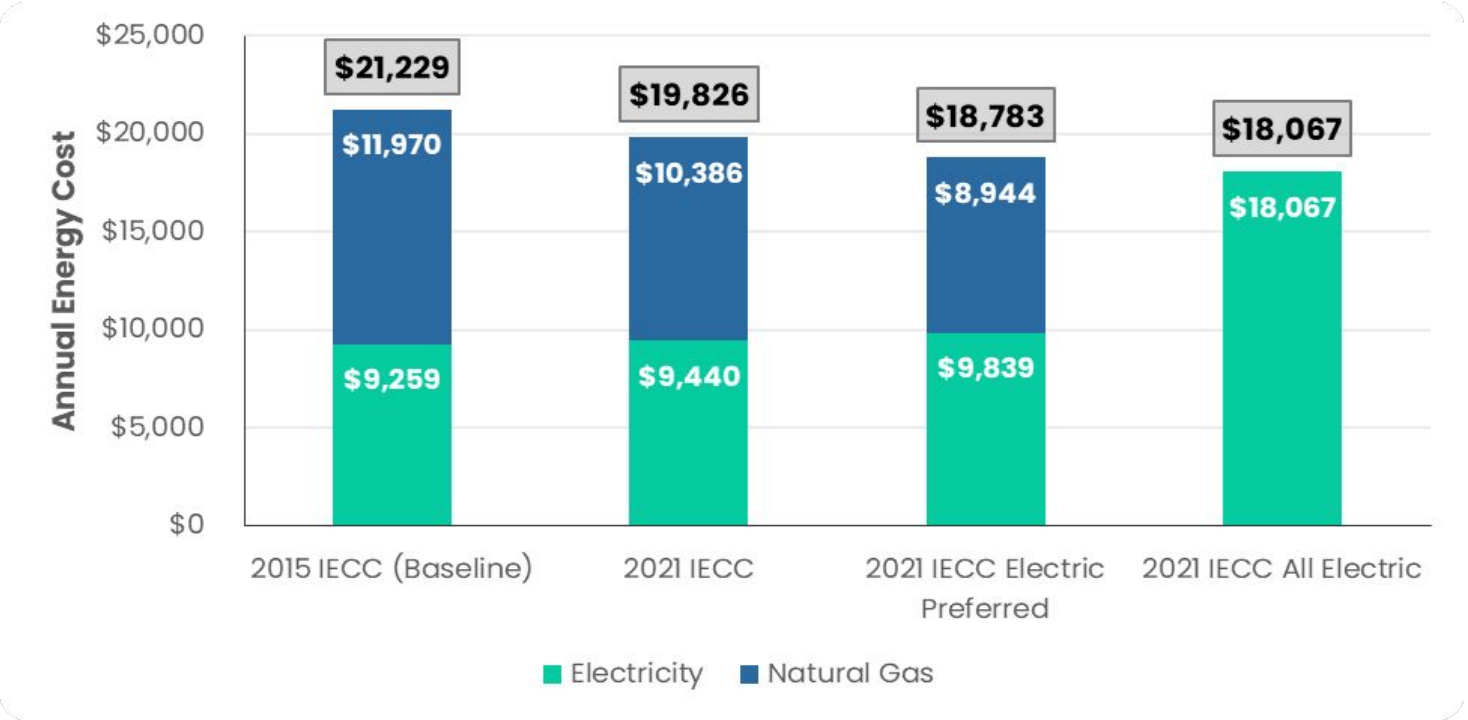
Findings: Single-Family Home Energy Cost Savings - 2015 IECC vs. 2021 IECC All-Electric



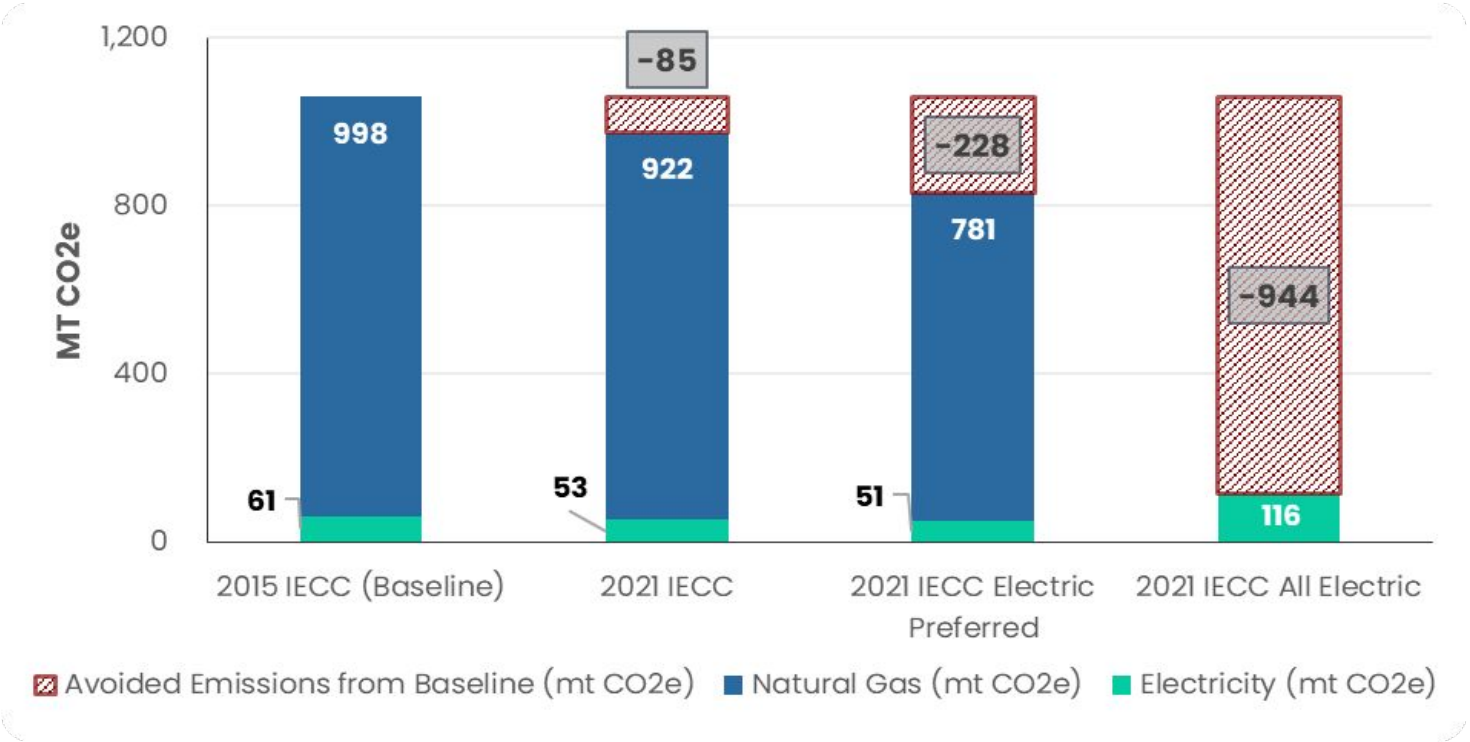
Findings: Multifamily GHG Emissions - 2015 IECC vs. 2021 IECC All-Electric



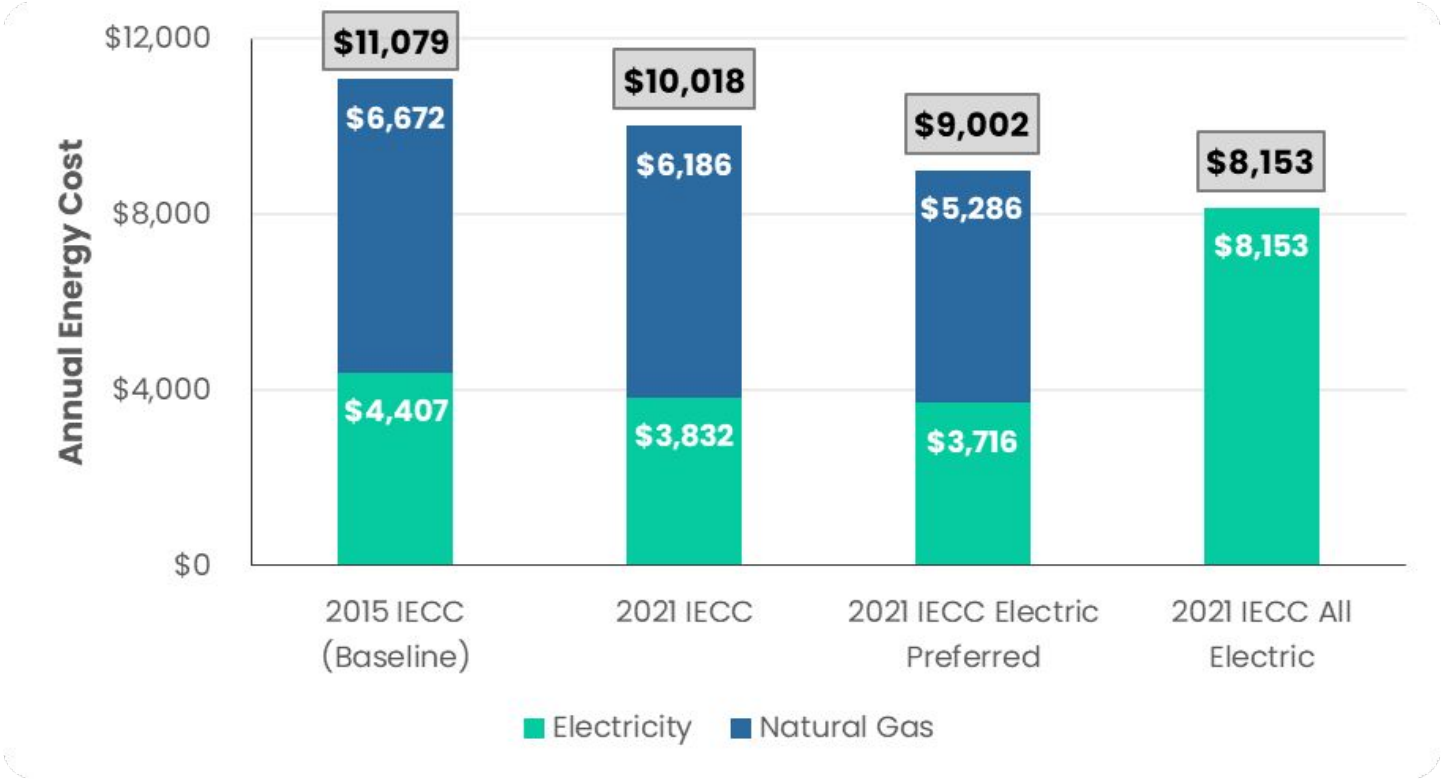
Findings: Multifamily Energy Cost Savings - 2015 IECC vs. 2021 IECC All-Electric



Findings: Commercial GHG Emissions - 2015 IECC vs. 2021 IECC All-Electric



Findings: Commercial Energy Cost Savings – 2015 IECC vs. 2021 IECC All-Electric



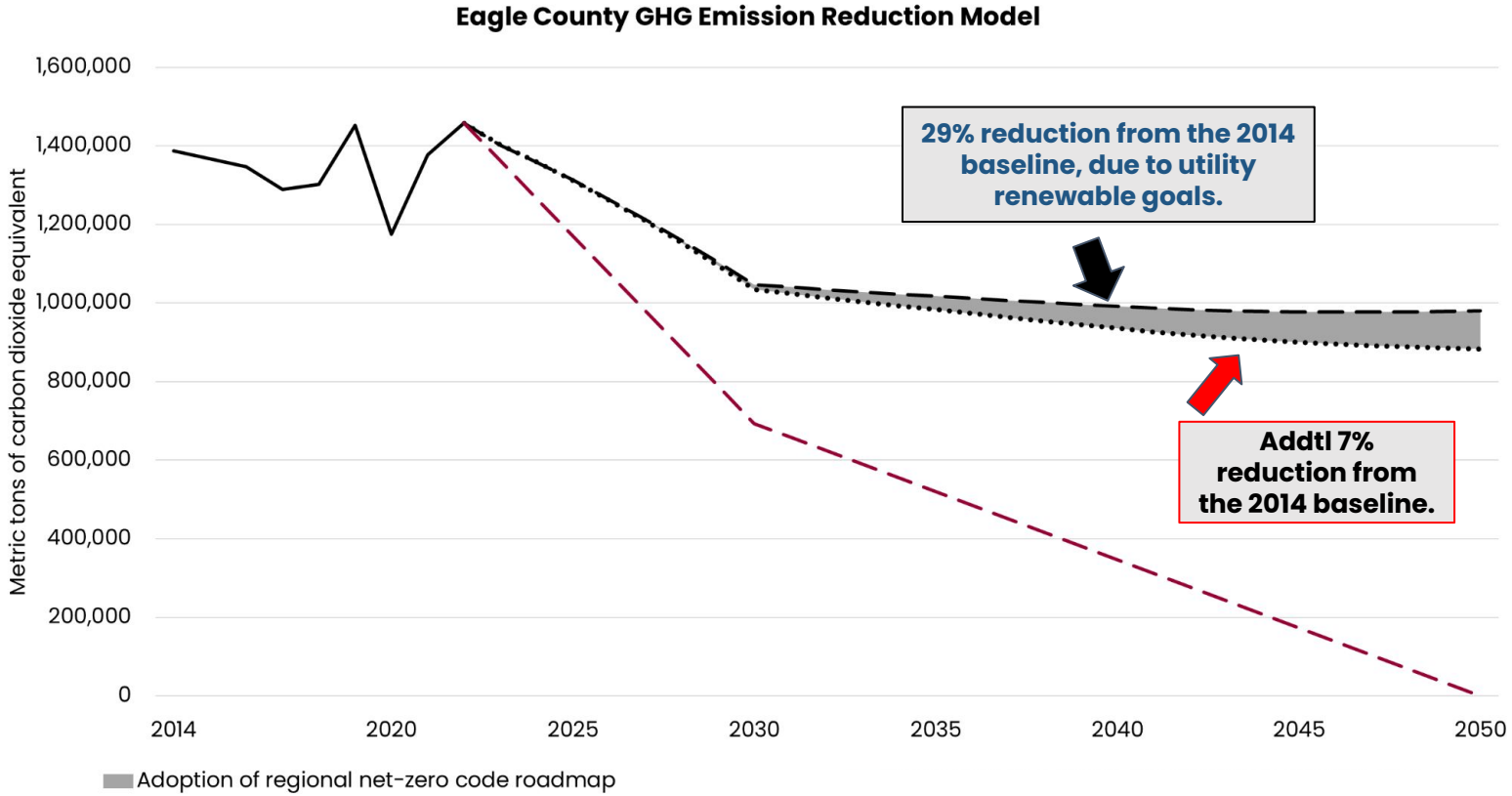
In Summary

- Across all building types, the 2021 IECC with all-electric requirements produced the **highest GHG reductions and lowest operating costs.**
    - One caveat being that single family homes have a slightly higher operating cost under this model. We assume this is because electric-preferred standards require additional energy efficiency measures, reducing energy use.
- We encourage you to read the full report for more information.

Net Zero Codes Climate Modeling

Walking Mountains hired Lotus Engineering and Sustainability in 2024 to produce a GHG reduction model based on four model climate strategies. **One such strategy was analyzing the emissions reductions from net zero building codes through 2050.**

Findings: Eagle County Climate Modeling



In Summary

- Looking specifically at Eagle County, net zero new construction codes would **reduce emissions by 7% through 2050**, after accounting for for the **29% reductions from electricity utilities decarbonizing their electricity sources.**
- The impact of net zero new construction codes is greatly amplified when you consider other neighboring jurisdictions implementing the same strategy.


State Code
Requirements

State Code Requirements

Updating building codes before June 30, 2026

Jurisdictions that adopt or update any building code before June 30, 2026 must adopt and enforce the **2021 IECC** and the **Colorado Model Electric Ready and Solar Ready Code**.

State Code Requirements

Updating building codes starting July 1, 2026

Starting July 1, 2026, jurisdictions that adopt or update any building code must adopt an energy code that is equivalent to or stronger than the **Colorado Model Low Energy and Carbon Code** (based on the 2024 IECC). Local amendments are allowed but must not decrease the effectiveness or energy efficiency of the code.

In Summary

Collaborating on energy code updates has supported...

- **Code consistency**, which leads to better code compliance, more efficiency, and reduced costs.
- Our **regional climate action goals**, which are responsive to GHG emissions coming from the built environment.
- Complying with **state energy code requirements**.


Collaborative
Projects
2022-2026

Eagle County Code Cohort

(2022-23)

Purpose: to support Eagle County communities in adopting a consistent energy code including EV-ready, solar-ready, electric-ready or preferred, and additional efficiency amendments.

Eagle County Code Cohort

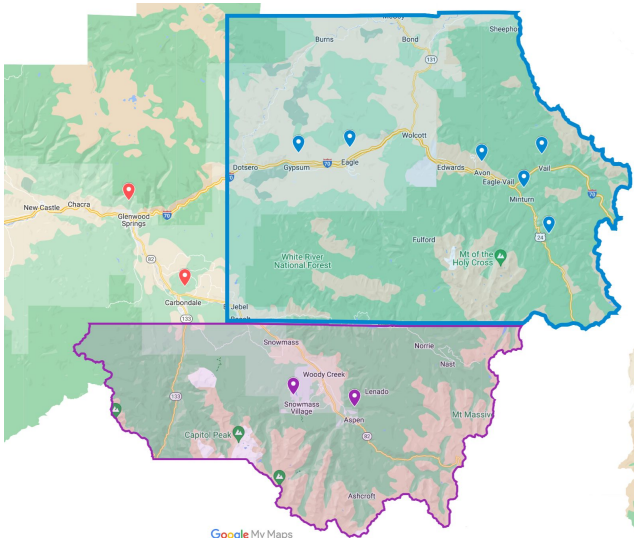
- Funded by the Colorado Energy Office (CEO)
- Hired Lotus Engineering and Sustainability, SWEEP, & code experts in Colorado
- Walking Mountains was the lead non-profit support
- Worked with Eagle County and Towns of Vail, Minturn, Red Cliff, Avon, Eagle, Gypsum, and Basalt
- **Outcomes**:
  - 4 communities in Eagle County are on the exact same building code
  - Built collaborative capacity among Building Officials
  - Workforce training and code enforcement/compliance resources

Regional Net Zero Roadmap (2024-25)

Purpose: to create a roadmap defining “net zero” in our unique context, and detailing how we will achieve net zero new construction codes by 2030.

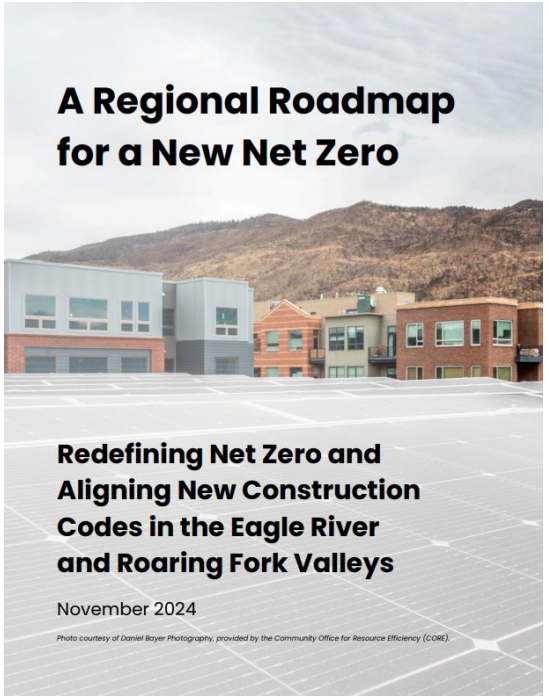
Regional Net Zero Roadmap

- Funded by the Colorado Energy Office (CEO)
- Hired Lotus Engineering and Sustainability & code experts in Colorado
- Walking Mountains, CORE, and CLEER provided leadership and support
- Expanded the effort by working with:
  - Towns of Avon, Basalt, Eagle, Gypsum, Minturn, Red Cliff, Vail, Snowmass Village, and Carbondale
  - Cities of Aspen and Glenwood Springs
  - Eagle, Pitkin, and Garfield County
  - Regional utilities



Regional Net Zero Roadmap

- **Outcomes**:
  - Defined “net zero” as a region
  - Collaboratively developed a stepped approach to construct buildings with net zero attributes through code adoption cycles from 2024 through 2030
  - Received comprehensive workforce feedback on the Roadmap
  - Several jurisdictions adopted the Roadmap across the region



Read the Roadmap here.

CEO Energy Code Adoption and Enforcement Grant

(2025-26)

Purpose: continue building upon collaborative momentum & utilize funds for a variety of projects that support code adoption, education, enforcement, and implementation.

CEO Energy Code Adoption and Enforcement Grant

- Funded by the Colorado Energy Office (CEO)
- CORE as the lead grant applicant with support from Walking Mountains
- Grant funds benefiting the Towns of Vail, Avon, Minturn, Red Cliff, Eagle, Basalt, Snowmass Village; the City of Aspen; Eagle and Pitkin County
- **Outcomes**:
  - 6 code trainings
  - 2 new BPI Building Analyst Technicians
  - Exterior Energy Offset Program (EEOP) trainings
  - Red Cliff code update
  - Net zero code cost analysis & case studies
  - Numerous code-related training and educational resources

IMPACT Accelerator

(2026-?)

Purpose: adopt new construction codes in alignment with Step B of our Regional Net Zero Roadmap, and provide funding for major existing building retrofits across the region.

IMPACT Accelerator

- *At the time of creating this, we have submitted our application but not yet received a response*
- Colorado Energy Office (CEO) grant program
- City of Aspen as the lead applicant, with support from CORE and Walking Mountains
- Grant funds benefiting the Towns of Vail, Avon, Minturn, Red Cliff, Eagle, Basalt, Snowmass Village; the City of Aspen; Eagle and Pitkin County
- Objectives:
  - Collaboratively update building codes in alignment with Step B of our Regional Roadmap, which includes an **all-electric code** with exceptions
  - Fund significant existing building retrofits across the region, creating proofs of concept and generating market transformation

Concluding Thoughts

"If you want to go fast, go alone. **If you want to go far, go together**."

Collaborative code updates have enabled us to:

- Create economies of scale
- Pool critical resources
- Build a stronger workforce
- Achieve climate goals
- Create healthier, more efficient indoor environments
- Build capacity to tackle challenges as a region and learn from one another

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Thank You

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If you have questions, feel free to reach out to Gina McCrackin at gina@aspencore.org or Kim Burke at kimb@walkingmountains.org.