

# Three routes through NEPA

## 1 *Categorical Exclusion*

Under NEPA, transportation projects that we know do not individually or cumulatively have significant environmental effects are classified as categorical exclusions (CEs).



*The Spencer Street bridge is an example of a project subject to the Categorical Exclusion process.*

## 2 *Environmental Assessment*

Where the significance of environmental impacts is unknown, a federal agency may prepare an environmental assessment (EA). An EA is meant to provide sufficient evidence and analysis for determining whether to prepare an environmental impact statement or a finding of no significant impact (FONSI). The FONSI is the final step in the EA process, when the project will not have significant impacts. It documents the preferred alternative and presents the basis for the decision.



*Route 281 in Cortlandville, NY is an example of a project subject to the Environmental Assessment process.*

## 3 *Environmental Impact Statement*

NEPA requires a federal agency to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) when there is a proposal for a major federal action expected to affect the quality of the natural and built environment and/or generate substantial controversy on environmental grounds. An EIS includes a detailed evaluation of the proposed action and alternatives. The EIS serves as a tool for environmentally sensitive decision making.



*The Tappan Zee Bridge is an example of a project subject to the Environmental Impact Statement process.*