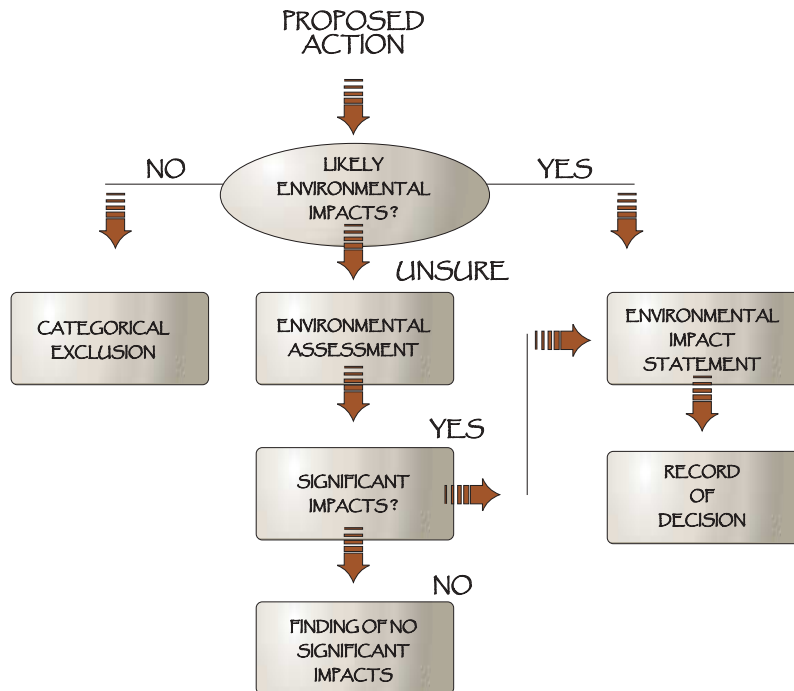


# National Environmental Policy Act Process



## WHAT IS NEPA

The national environmental policy act (NEPA) is a national policy for the protection of the natural environment and human health and welfare and is carried out by promoting efforts to prevent or eliminate damage to the environment. From a transportation perspective, NEPA requires that alternatives be evaluated and decisions be made in the public's best interest based on a balanced consideration of the need for safe and efficient transportation.

## DEFINITIONS

### CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION (CatEx)

A NEPA document prepared for certain actions that are known through past experience to have no significant environmental impact and therefore "excluded" from future NEPA processing.

### ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (EA)

The EA is a concise document summarizing technical analysis to support the discussion of alternatives and their associated impacts. If there are no significant impacts, a Finding Of No Significant (FONSI) is prepared. The FONSI completes the NEPA process.

### ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS STATEMENT (EIS)

An evaluation of all reasonable alternatives that discuss why other alternatives were eliminated from the detailed study. The EIS also describes mitigation measures that are required to be incorporated into the implementation of the preferred alternative. The EIS is only conducted if the anticipated impacts of the federal action are found to be significant. A Record Of Decision (ROD) is prepared as the final decision of the preferred alternative in the EIS.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**When an EA or EIS has been completed, who will make the decision on the document's recommended alternative(s)?**

CDOT first evaluates the document to ensure CDOT, FHWA and NEPA requirements are met before transmitting to FHWA, who will make the decision.

**Is there a point in this process where the funding availability can stall the approval process?**

In metropolitan area, a NEPA decision document (FONSI or ROD) cannot be issued until the proposed project is part of a fiscally constrained plan prepared by the Denver Regional Council of Governments. This means that the funding source must be known, or funds already available, for the construction of the proposed project.



## C-470 CORRIDOR PROJECT

