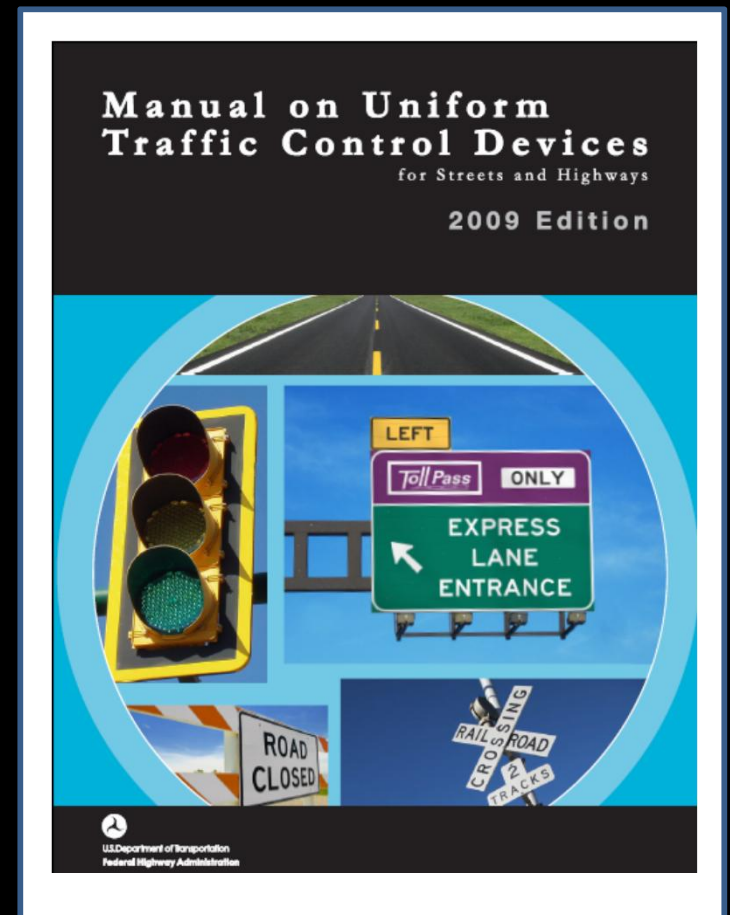


# Future Direction of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices

Jonathan Upchurch, P.E., PTOE

ITE Western District Annual Meeting

July 13, 2016



# Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices

for Streets and Highways

2009 Edition



U.S. Department of Transportation  
Federal Highway Administration

## How frequently do you use the MUTCD?

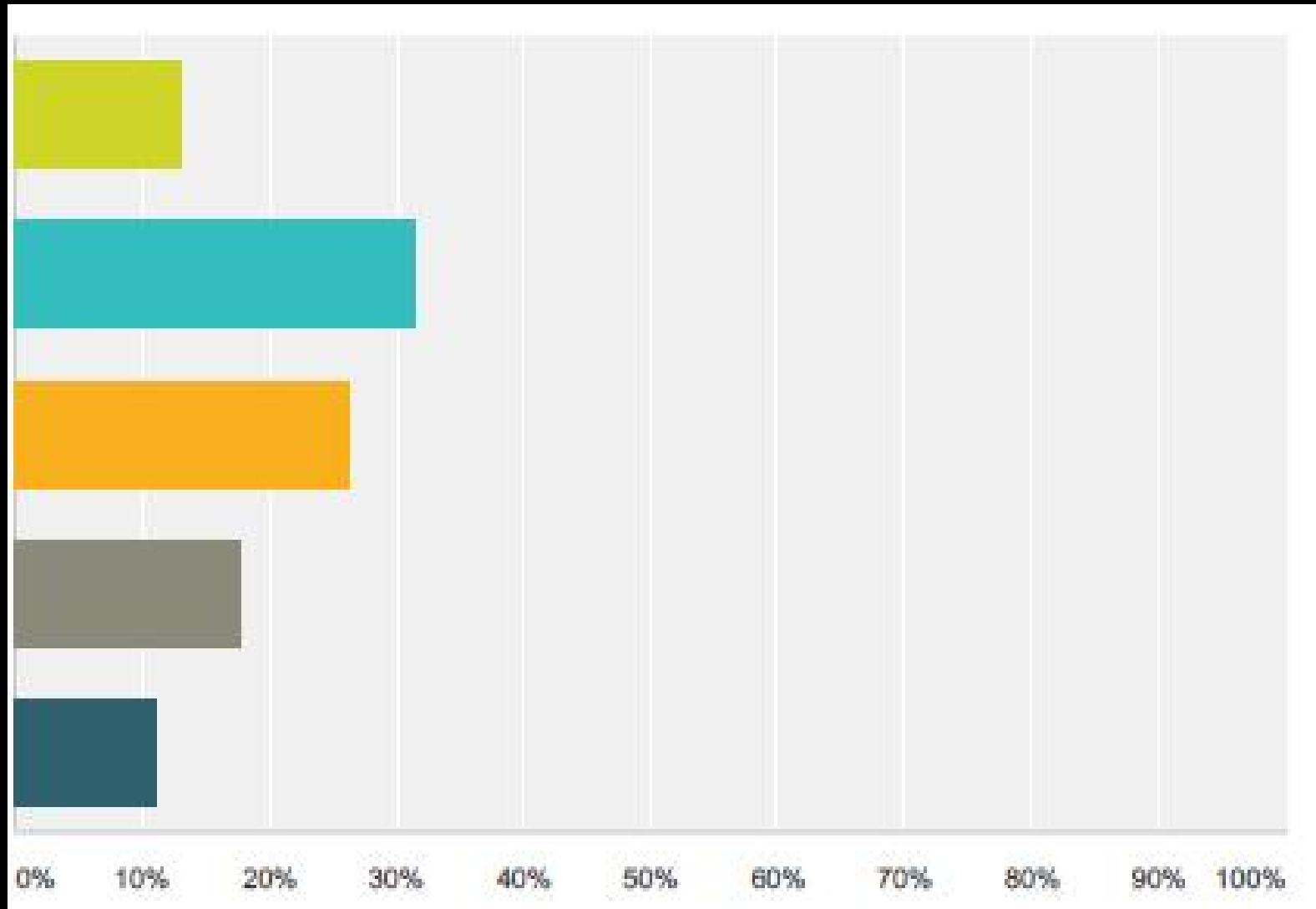
Daily

2-3 times  
/ week

4-8 times  
/ month

1-3 times  
/ month

< once /  
month



January, 2013

FHWA Request for Comments

# Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices

for Streets and Highways

2009 Edition



U.S. Department of Transportation  
Federal Highway Administration

864 pages

1 ½ inches  
thick

4 1/2 pounds

“Streamlining”

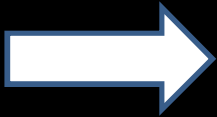
What does it mean ?





**Manual on Uniform  
Traffic Control Devices**

**2009  
Edition**



**Manual on Uniform  
Traffic Control Devices**

**2009  
Edition**



“Streamlining” =

“making the MUTCD easier to use”



# Planned Approach

## Proposed Enhancements to 20XX Edition:

- Incorporate routine updates
- Reassess each standard and retain, delete or downgrade
- Identify and eliminate redundant or unnecessary text
- Reorganize content where opportunities for improving flow are identified
- Reorganize / reconfigure existing figures to better correlate with text

December 22, 2015  
Federal Register  
Request for Comments

Pages 79522 to 79526

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

**Federal Highway Administration**

**23 CFR Part 655**

**[FHWA Docket No. FHWA-2015-0028]**

**National Standards for Traffic Control  
Devices; the Manual on Uniform Traffic  
Control Devices for Streets and  
Highways; Request for Comment**

**AGENCY:** Federal Highway  
Administration (FHWA), Department of  
Transportation (DOT).

**ACTION:** Request for Comments (RFC).

January, 2014

Vision and Strategic Plan for MUTCD  
adopted by National Committee

## Purpose of RFC

- New traffic control devices
- New applications of traffic control devices
- New technologies for traffic control devices
- Paper vs. electronic versions
- An MUTCD structure that is easy and efficient to use

Context: Updating the Manual is no small task

time-consuming

takes time to incorporate new devices and applications

## How frequently do you use the MUTCD?

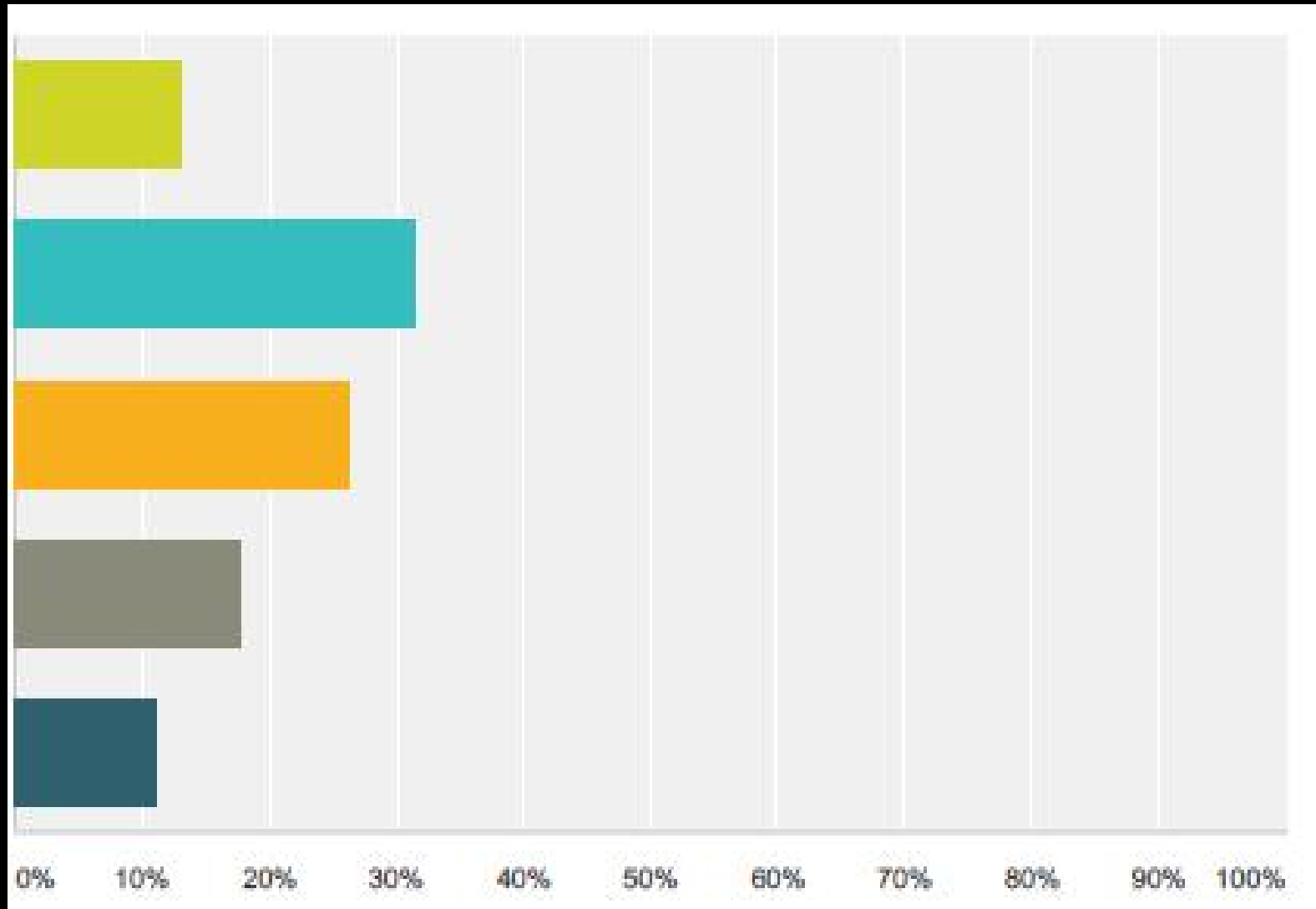
Daily

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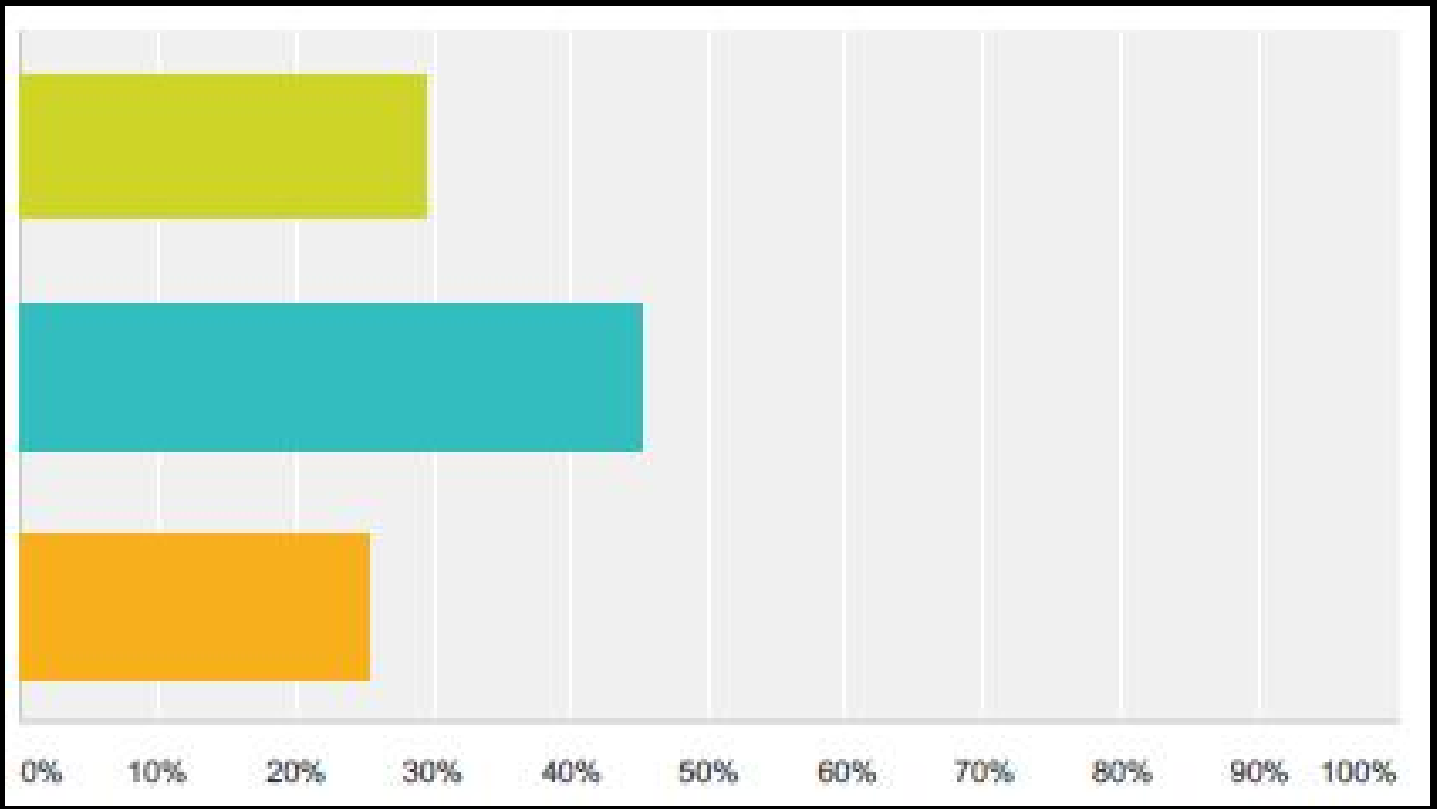
1-3 times  
/ month

< once /  
month



Do you work in a state that has adopted:

- 18 The National MUTCD
- 22 The National MUTCD with a state supplement
- 10 A separate state Manual



Which of the following best identifies your employer?

Federal government	1 %
State government	13 %
County government	7 %
City or other local government	25 %
Consulting firm or self-employed	52 %
Other	2 %



MUTCD content should continue to be written with the traffic engineer as the intended audience.

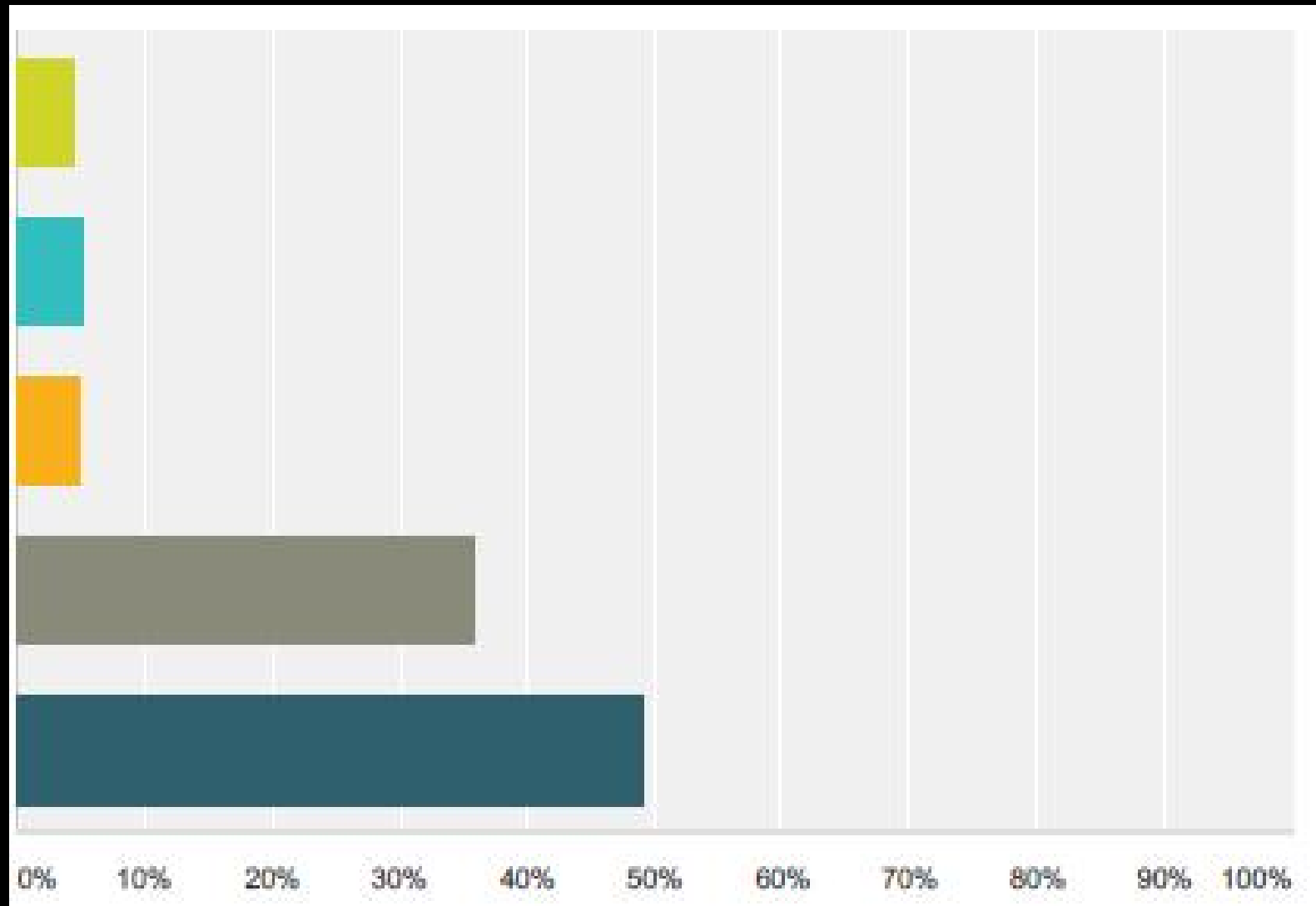
Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neutral

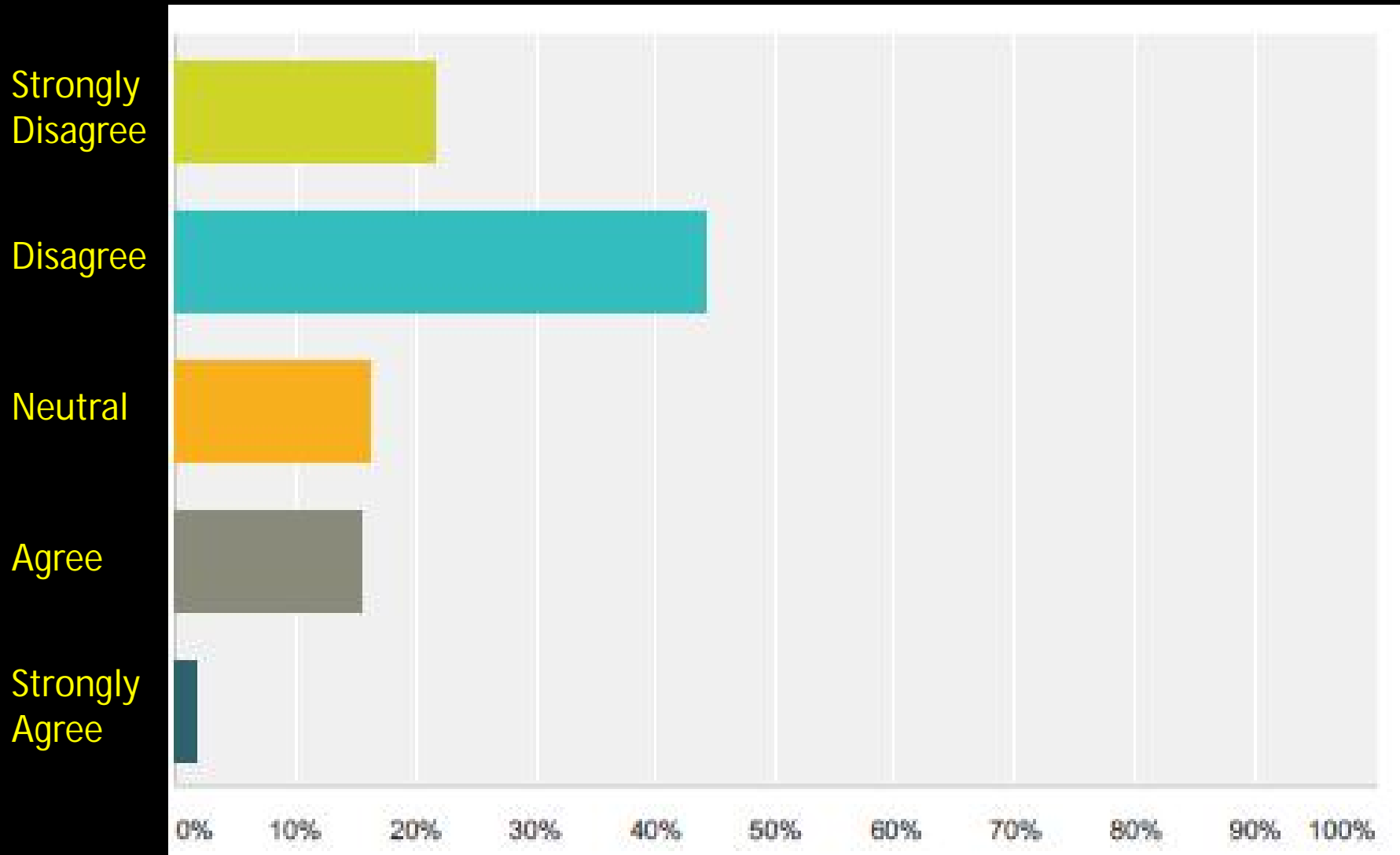
Agree

Strongly Agree

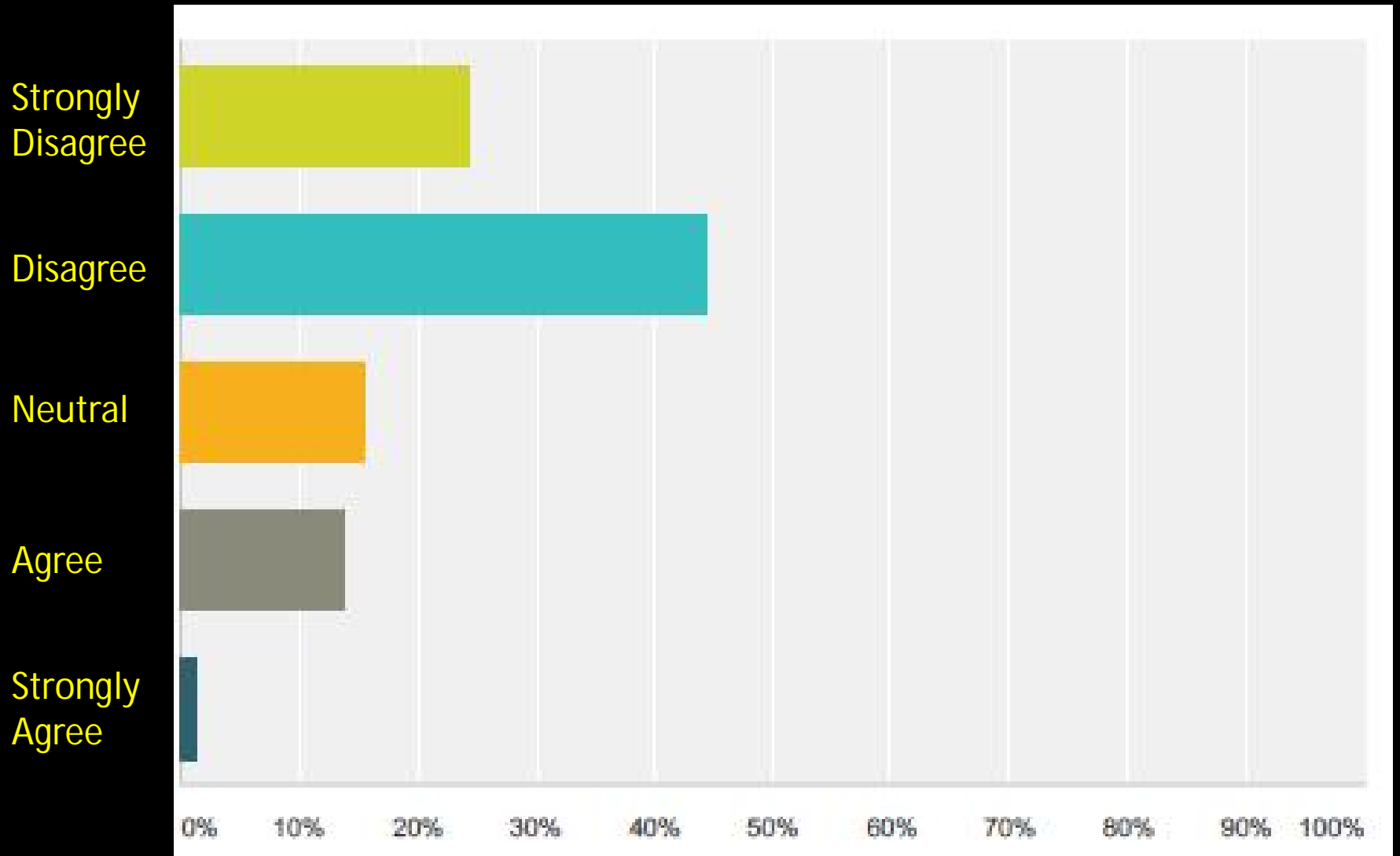


No. While traffic engineers are an important audience for the MUTCD, in practical use the Manual is both a design document and a field document. Therefore, it must provide both flexibility for designers and uniformity for field users. It is also important to note that many field users are NOT engineers.

There is content...in the MUTCD that is not needed by the traffic engineer.



In future editions, FHWA should strive to reduce the amount of explanatory language in the MUTCD.



What percentage of the content...could be deleted...?

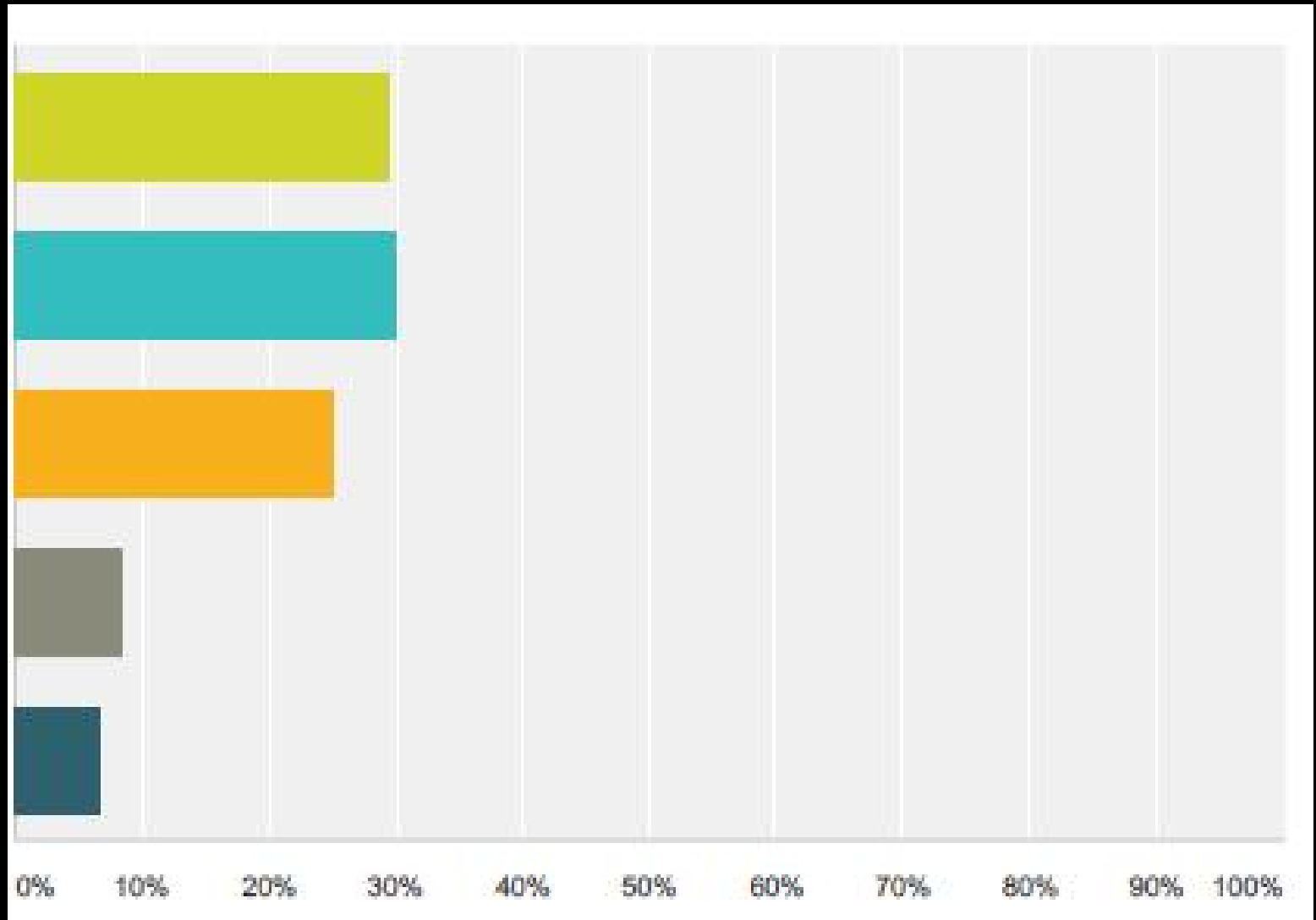
None

1 to 5 %

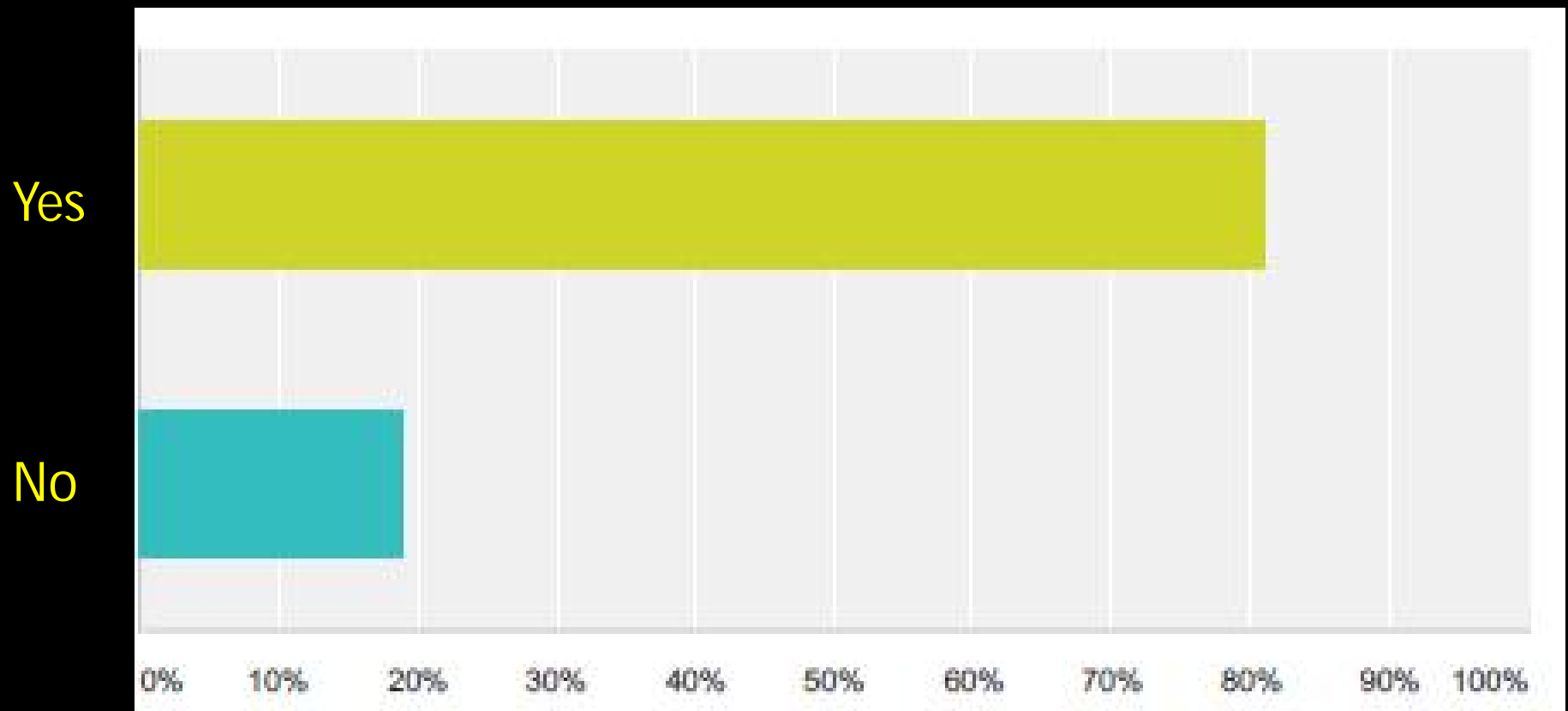
5 to 10 %

10 to 25 %

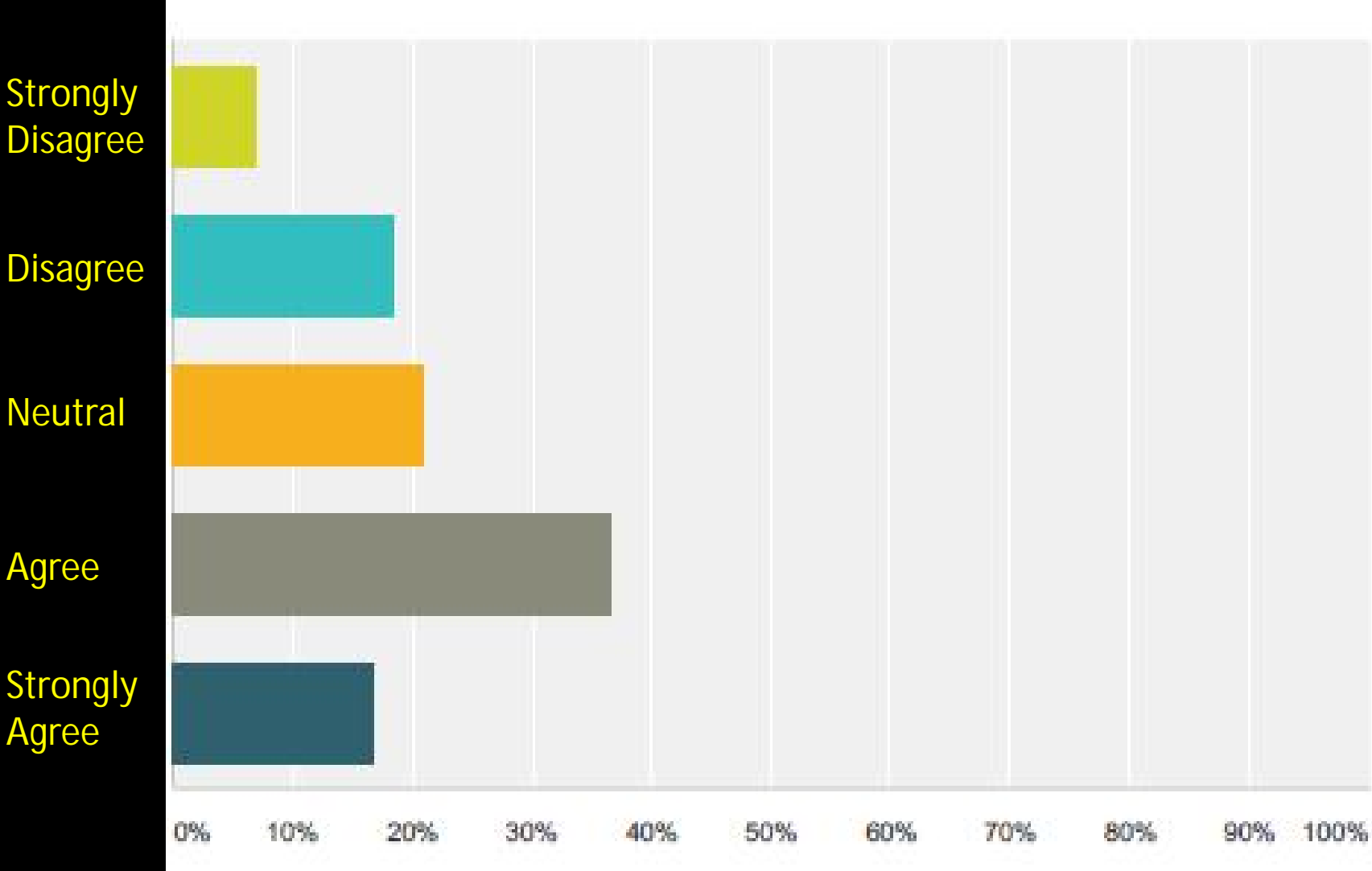
> 25 %



If explanatory material and supplemental information is removed, should it be retained in a separate document?



If there were a separate document...  
it would serve the needs of the traffic engineer.



# Evolution of the MUTCD



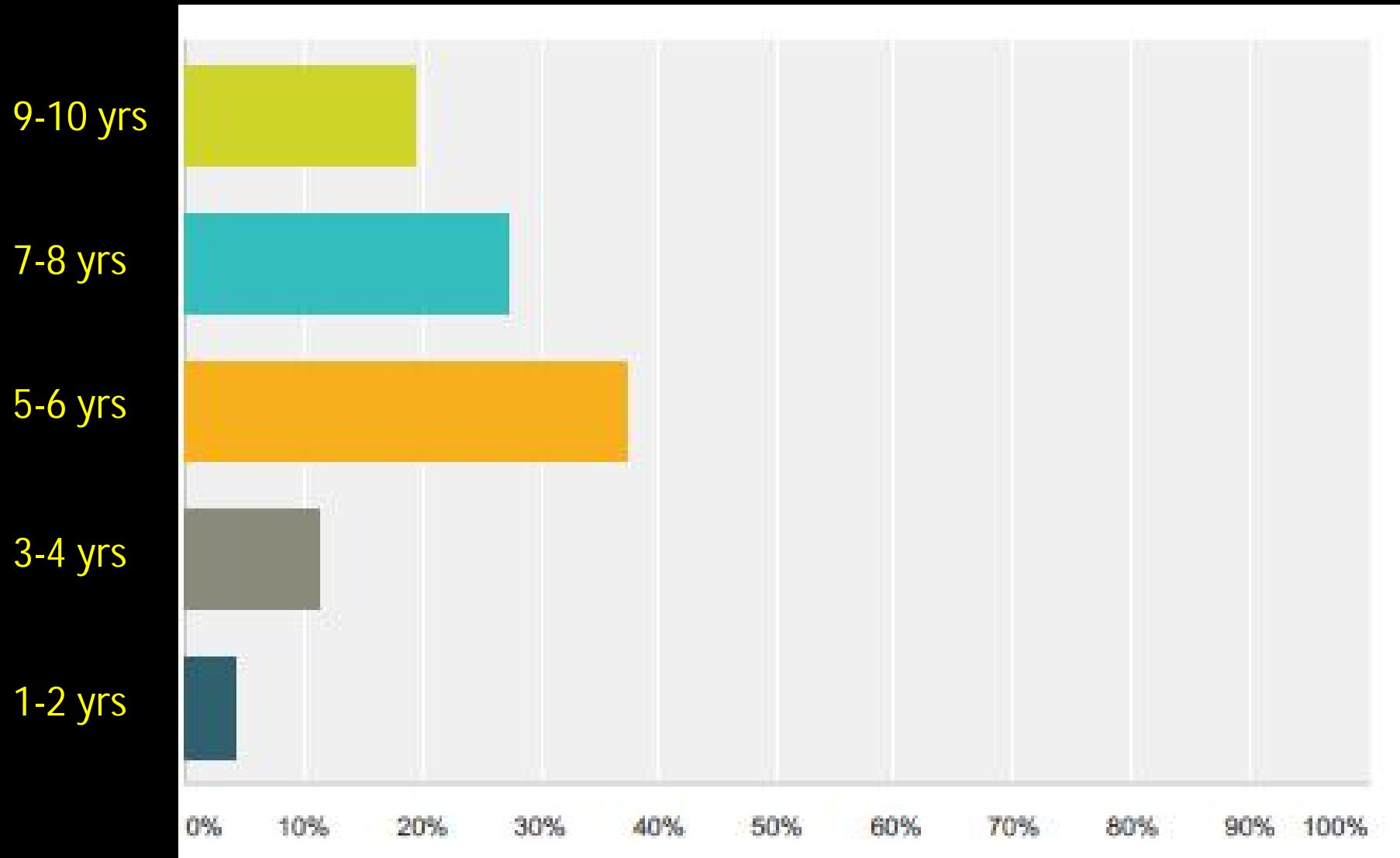
Working  
Toward  
20XX  
MUTCD

1935

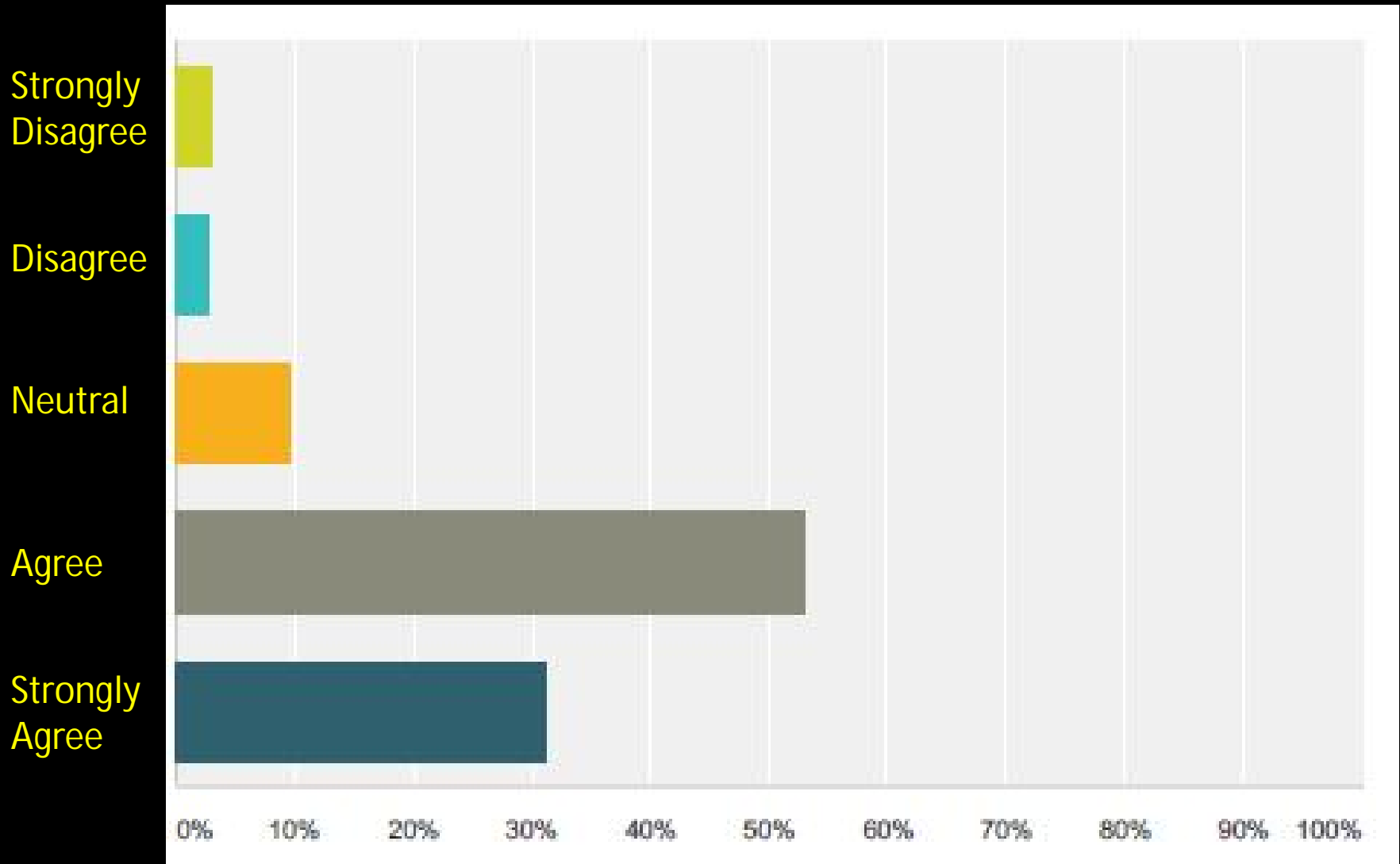
Future



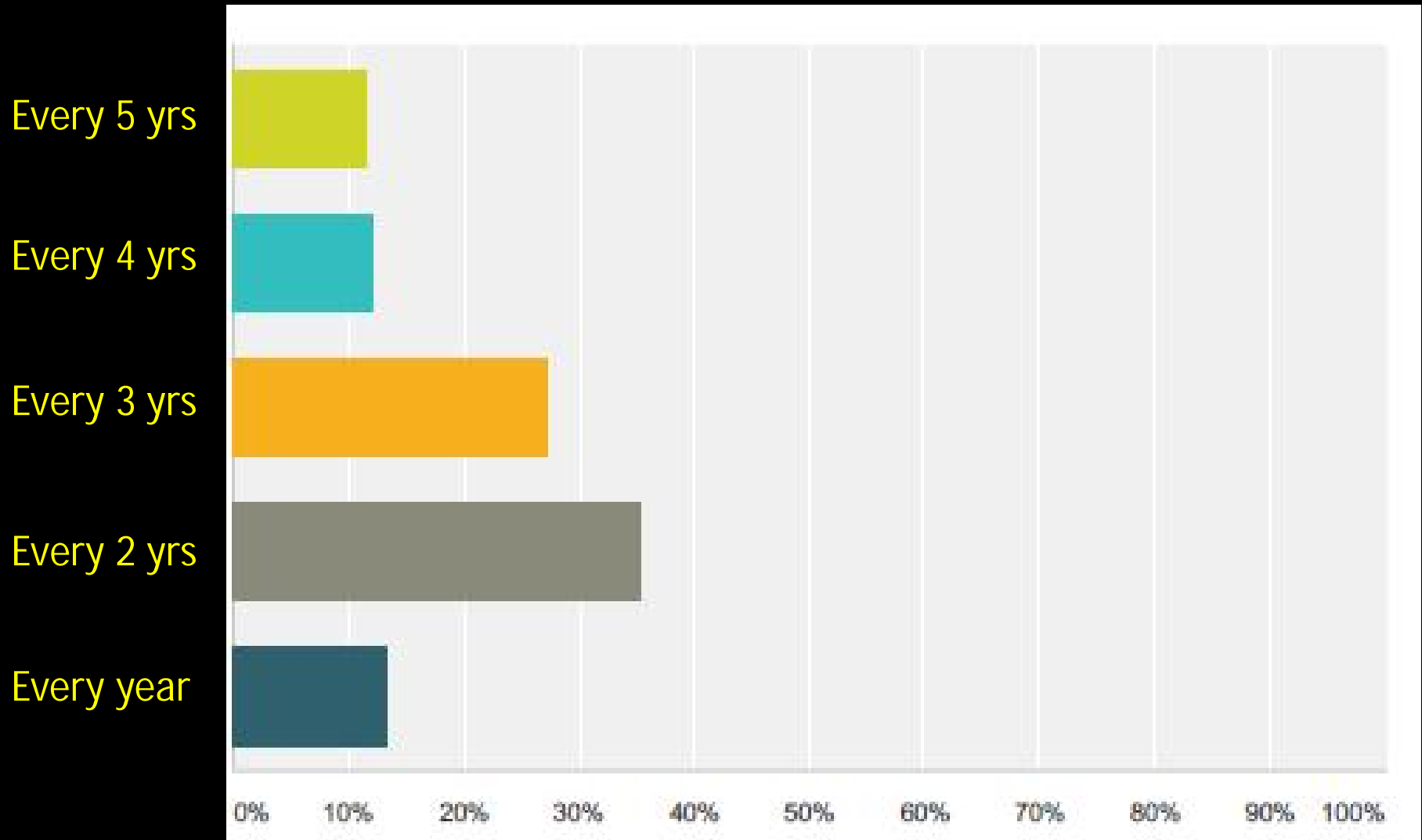
Considering only the needs of users,  
what is the most desirable frequency for new editions?



FHWA should issue...revisions...between full editions of the MUTCD.



If FHWA does issue revisions between editions, what is the most desirable frequency?



Would dissemination of National Committee recommendations – before adoption in the MUTCD - be useful to the traffic engineer?

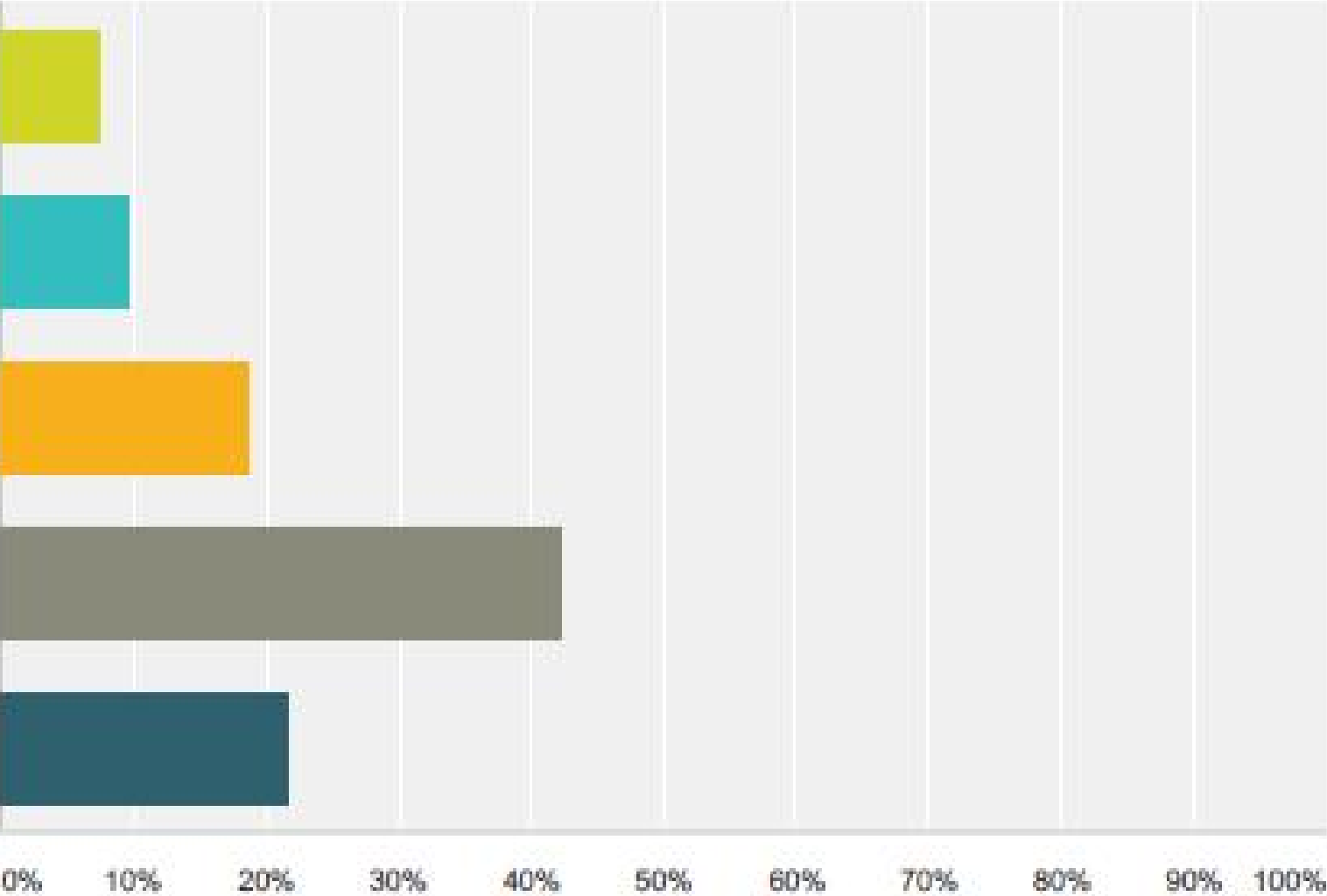
Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree



ITE responded to the RFC on February 2

# What does the future hold ?

Uncertainty about date of next edition

FHWA exploring feasibility of revisions as an alternative to a full edition

Additional interim approvals



# Vision and Strategic Plan for MUTCD

## Future Editions

2017

2024 – 2026

Mid-2030's

Continued evolution from paper  
document to electronic document



# Vision and Strategic Plan for MUTCD

MUTCD Language

Purpose of MUTCD

Definition of Engineering Study

Provide more hyperlinks and pop-ups  
/ Provide cross-indexing

First hotlinks (hyperlinks) version was created  
in 2012



Use hyperlinks to provide better coordination  
between related content

Section 1A.08 Authority for Placement of Traffic  
Control Devices

Paragraph 3

All regulatory traffic control devices shall be  
supported by laws, ordinances, or regulations.

## Use of "smart tags"

identify the traffic control device

Identify activity(s) being addressed by each provision

Identify the user group(s) that would most likely  
perform the activity

Identify the level of mandate

Identify related reference materials

Identify related applications