



# Your City Listens to Furies

Lilia Roo  
Anthrocon 2025



Sticker © 2025 Recurrent



# About Lilia Roo

- Furry since 2018
- Wrote transformation stories!
- Software engineer
- Graduated 2023, but been employed in industry for 5+ years
- Cut teeth via small FOSS contributions beforehand
- Maintainer of [sewifurs.org](https://sewifurs.org) since 2021
- Maintainer of Xfburn since 2022
- Developer for Weasyl since 2024



Fursuit by Luno Wroo  
Photo by Mallory Gwynn

# Furries!



Bronze Fonz Furwalk, F2 2024  
Photo taken by Soma Coyote

- People love furries!
- But life can get in the way of fun
- Unplanned car repairs
- Parking too costly
- Furmeets too far away
- We have the power to make things better!




# Introduction

What this is about:

- Very local, street-by-street improvements
- The art of the email
- Making requests of people in office

Out of scope:

- Protests
  - Campaigning
  - Federal happenings
  - Hours- or days-long activities
- 




# Outline

- Starting small
  - Who owns what infrastructure?
  - The basics: Making maintenance happen
- Building up to new infrastructure
  - Form requests
  - Writing short but effective emails
  - Getting safety improvements
  - Public involvement meetings
- Encouraging other floofs to do the same!



# Introduction

- This panel is US-centric
  - Your mileage will vary with place and time
  - Key officials may be against you
  - Your government structure may be different
- 



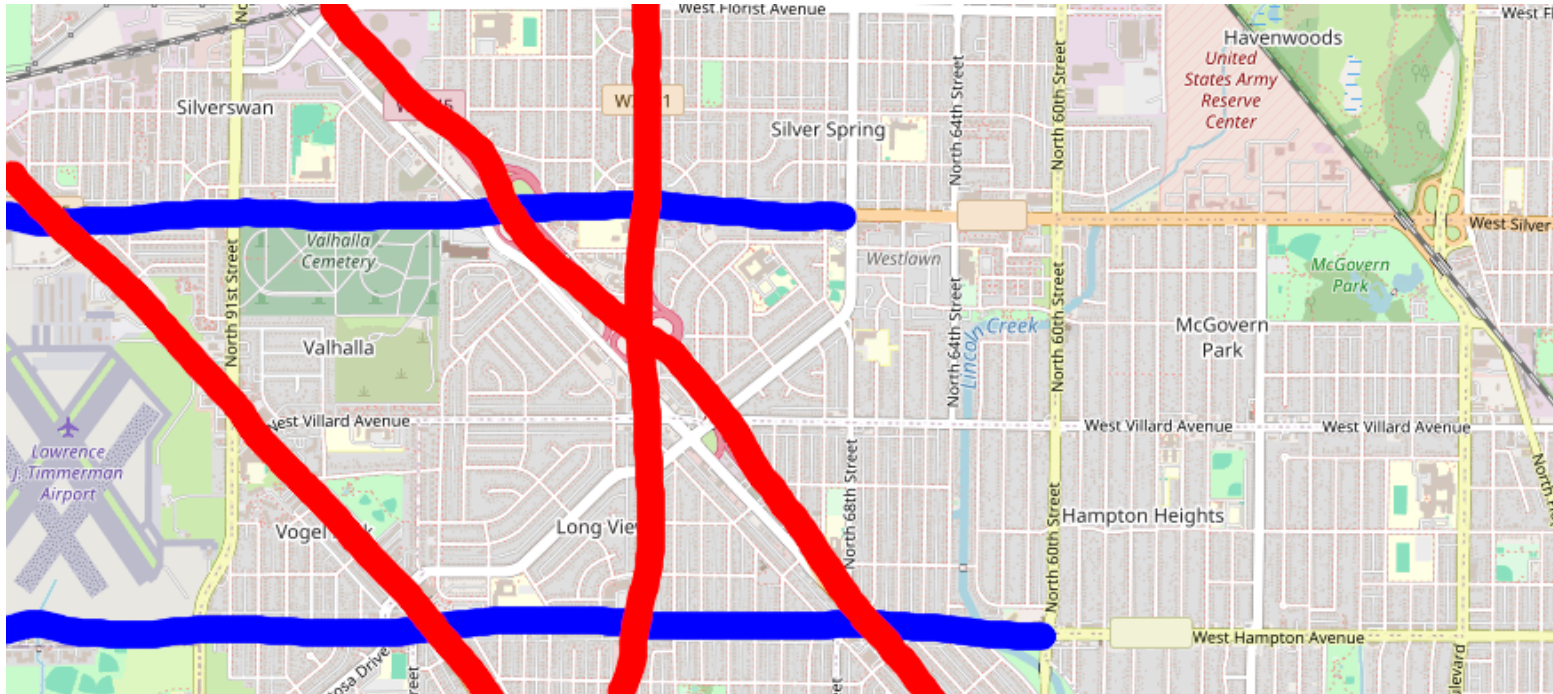
# Starting small: Maintenance

- They gotta fix this road!
- But, who *is* 'they'?
  - The city? *Which* city?
  - The county?
  - (non-WI) Any township?
  - The state?
- Any specific department or agency?



*A pothole in Dilova Street in Kyiv (2022)*  
Роман Рябенко, CC0, via Wikimedia Commons

# Road ownership - Example

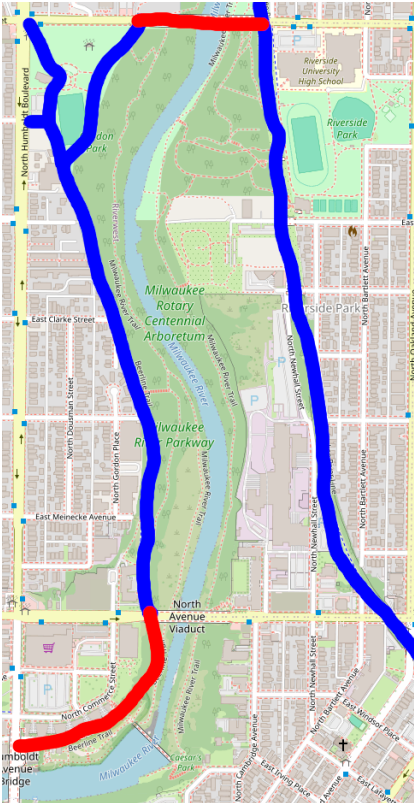


Red: WisDOT State Trunk Highway  
Blue: MCDOT County Trunk Highway

There could be private drives, too!



# Trail ownership - Example



- Red: City of Milwaukee
- Blue: Milwaukee County

Even trail ownership can be discontinuous!



# Maintenance

Now I know who owns it, how do I complain?

- Major cities usually have a pothole form
  - Submitted > 100 in Milwaukee, ~2/3 get filled
- County/state highways might be handled by city
  - City might get reimbursed for maintenance
  - Separate from control of road configuration



# Maintenance

Address (required)

Drag the map pin to mark the issue's location or type its address here

Multi-block? (required)

Choose among the following... ▼

Number of potholes (required)

Description

Anything else we should know about the issue?

 Add a photo

Cancel

Submit

- Usually pretty easy
- ‘Test the waters’
- Does local gov’t care?
- How long does it take?



# Maintenance


- Will the gov't get back to me?
  - Might be a few days, might be a few weeks
  - Might be never! Submit a few; see if any get fixed
- Check if the pothole got filled
  - Congrats, you've now made your city do something!
- What if there's no form?
  - We'll get to that shortly, in the email section!





# Other requests

Now that I know gov't can work, what else can I do?

- Usually, dozens of these form request types exist
    - Invisible road markings
    - Broken sidewalks
    - Destroyed signage
    - Lights not turning on at night
  - You already pay for these services! Use them!
    - You deserve working infrastructure!
- 



## Bike Rack Request Location Information

Please provide details about your suggested bike rack location

### 1. Address \*

Enter your answer

### 2. Zip Code \*

Request locations must be within Milwaukee City limits

Enter your answer

### 3. Please describe the requested location \*

Available sidewalk space; adjacent business, building, or park; etc.

Enter your answer

### 4. What type of bike rack would you suggest for this location? \*

Please refer to the previous Bike Rack Request page for bike rack type descriptions.

Select your answer

### 5. How many bike racks do you suggest for this location? \*

Select your answer

### 6. Why is this a good location for a bike rack?

Enter your answer

# Other requests

I want something new!

- Take a look through your gov't's website
- Many programs you might not know about!
- Milwaukee example:  
Bike rack request form

# What if there's no form?



Red Arrow Park in CycloSM


Blue dots are new bike racks (usually multiple)

- Another bike example
- Popular downtown park
- Often used as a meetup spot for demonstrations
- Used to have no racks
- Owned by Milwaukee County
- The city has a form, but not the county!
- What do I do?



# Art of the email

Let's email a county supervisor!

- Look up who is the right one
  - Short (1-3 paragraphs)
  - Current situation, why it matters
  - Already-existing examples of this thing
  - If possible, mention a connection
  - Compliments help a lot
- 



# Example email

*While at an event at Red Arrow Park earlier today, I and about a dozen other people who arrived by bicycle were unable to find any proper bicycle parking. We were able to use streetlights and signposts as makeshift bicycle parking, but we were surprised at the lack of bicycle racks, considering that other parks in the system do have them. Another County Supervisor was at the event we were at; I brought up the issue to him, and he directed me to contact you about if there happen to be any plans to install bike racks at Red Arrow Park, and if there aren't any, what can be done to make such a thing happen. Despite the park's small size, it is a heavily used area for skating, rallying, and catching a break between classes or in the middle of the work day, and I (and everyone else biking to the event I was at today) believe proper bicycle parking would be a welcome addition.*

(My tone was pretentious ^^; oops)



# Example email

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Current situation

Existing examples

Connection

Why it matters

What I want





# Email outcome

- My email is not perfect
  - Didn't specify turnout at the event (~60 people?)
  - Didn't give examples of parks with bike racks
  - My tone was kind of harsh and pretentious
- But, it worked!
  - About 6 weeks later, went from 0 to 15 bike racks
  - I see them get used! :D





# Safety

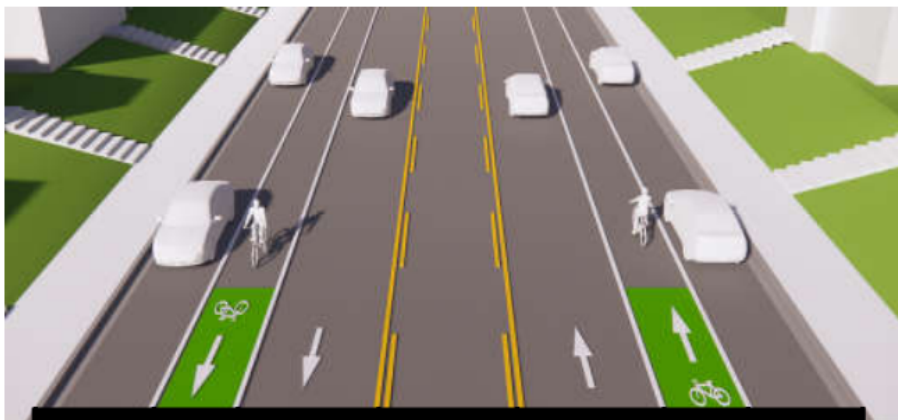
With that under our belt, let's tackle a safety issue!

- Our example: Van Buren Street
  - Major thoroughfare
  - Recently reconfigured with two-way cycletrack
  - Motorists sometimes enter cycletrack at intersections



# Emailing about safety - Example

## Reconfiguration of Van Buren Street (Milwaukee)



8'	6'	11'	10'	11'	6'	8'
PARKING	BIKE LANE	SOUTH BOUND	TURN LANE	NORTH BOUND	BIKE LANE	PARKING

Before  
(painted bike lanes)



8'	10'	10'	10'	8'	3'	11'
PARKING	SOUTHBOUND	PEDESTRIAN ISLAND / CROSSING	NORTHBOUND	PARKING/POTENTIAL FLOATING BUS ISLAND		TWO-WAY PROTECTED BIKE LANE

After  
(protected cycletrack)

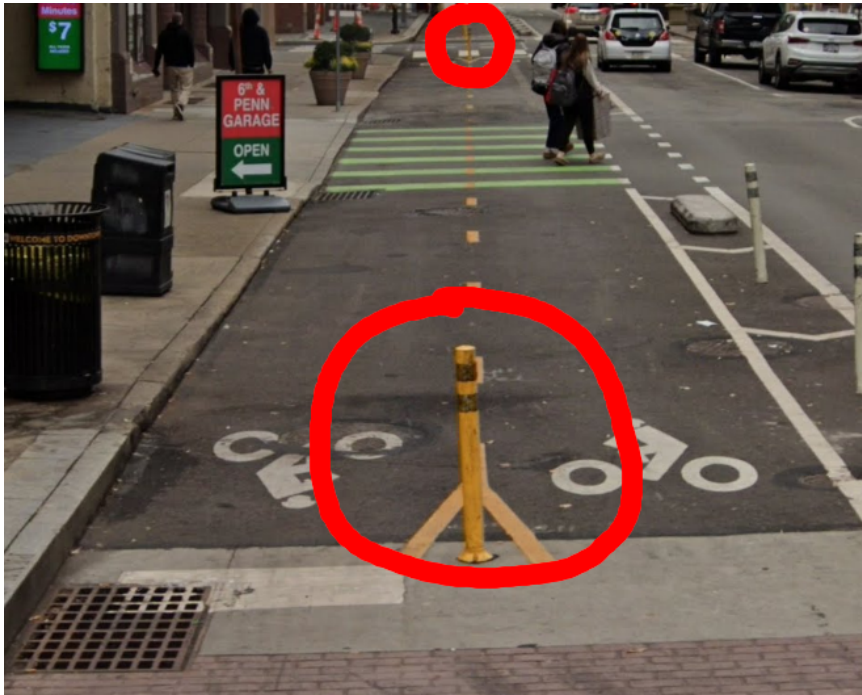


# Emailing about safety - Example

- Motorists enter the cycletrack.  
How can this be fixed?
- Think: specific and *cheap*
- Furries travel a lot for conventions!
- What have you seen work elsewhere?
- Time for another email!
  - For this example: I emailed Milwaukee DPW multimodal unit
  - Suggested what I saw in Pittsburgh during Anthrocon



# Emailing about safety - Example



Plastic posts circled in red

- Penn Ave (Pittsburgh)
- Seen during Anthrocon
- Similar cycleway setup
- Plastic posts at all intersections
- Cheap solution
- Doesn't stop intent
- But it stops mistakes!
- Most cycleway incursions are by mistake
- What else have you seen during conventions in other cities?





# Emailing about safety – Example

*The new cycletrack on Van Buren has been very useful so far. The northern end connects very well with the pathway that goes from Brady Street to the calm portion of North Water Street (and by extension, the Marsupial Bridge and Beerline Trail beyond). Though I had put in comments in favor of the one-direction-on-each-side-of-the-street approach at the public involvement meetings about the project, now that I'm using it, I'm glad the bidirectional approach was chosen instead specifically because of that seamless connection at the north end.*

(paragraph 1 of 3)





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Connection

Compliment

(paragraph 1 of 3)





# Emailing about safety – Example

*However, about half the times I have taken the Van Buren cycletrack, I've needed to avoid motorists that are parked inside the cycletrack. I haven't been keeping any hard data, so I don't have a pattern to the illegal parking, but anecdotally, I want to say it happens most often on the stretch between Ogden and Brady, and it seems to most often happen close to intersections and close to driveways.*

(paragraph 2 of 3)





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Current situation

(paragraph 2 of 3)





# Emailing about safety – Example

*Would it be possible to reconfigure the cycletrack to better prevent people from illegally parking inside of it? When I was in Pittsburgh around the fourth of July to visit friends, I noticed that the cycletracks there (the ones that are similar to the setup here on Van Buren) have a single extra flexpost or bollard installed in the middle of the cycletrack at every intersection, and I don't recall having seen anybody illegally park in a cycletrack there during my time there. I wonder if something similar could help prevent people from parking in the Van Buren cycletrack before a cyclist gets hurt.*

(paragraph 3 of 3)





# Emailing about safety - Example

Would it be possible to reconfiaure the cvcletrack to better prevent people from illegally parking inside of it? When I was in Pittsburgh around the fourth of July to visit friends. I noticed that the cvcletracks there (the ones that are similar to the setup here on Van Buren) have a single extra flexpost or bollard installed in the middle of the cycletrack at every intersection, and I don't recall having seen anybody illegally park in a cvcletrack there during my time there. I wonder if something similar could help prevent people from parking in the Van Buren cycletrack before a cyclist gets hurt.

What I want

Existing example

Why it matters

(paragraph 3 of 3)



# Emailing about safety - Example

- Outcome
  - Acknowledged four days later
  - Posts installed day after!
  - Illegal parking nearly disappeared overnight
- Downside
  - Posts were removed for winter :(
  - Being reinstalled now following parts being backordered
  - But, illegal parking is still less common!






# Public involvement meetings

- Construction isn't just fund-and-build
- Even 'simple' redesigns have years of planning
- The public is often invited to comment
  - Not many people usually show up
  - This gives 'crazies' undue weight
  - But, it means just a few furries can help so much!





# Public involvement meetings

- Why should furries care?
    - Walkable streets → easier fursuiting, more onlookers
    - Slower streets → lower chance of a car crash
      - Less risk of physical, mental, or financial injury
    - Better bike and bus infrastructure
      - Can still attend furmeets if car is broken
      - Can get inebriated and still get home safely
      - Money becomes less of an issue
    - Dense living → more floofs nearby, less distance to travel!
  - How often have these come up in your local community?
- 



# Public involvement meetings

- Usually 1-2 meetings per year per project
  - Design alternatives presented
  - Alternatives refined, selections narrowed
  - Preferred alternative picked
    - Still room for minor changes you suggest
- Often open-house style
  - I'm usually there 10-30 minutes
  - Leave specific feedback, maybe talk with engineers a bit
- Bring floofs who also care! :3





# Public involvement meetings

- Where are they announced?
  - Your city's engagement portal, if one exists
  - Your city's email notification system
  - Sometimes mentioned by local news
- Usually can leave feedback afterwards
  - Though, in-person feedback may be preferred
- Remember: better cities are furry cities!





# Thanks for coming!

Have any questions after the end of the hour? Contact me here!

- [fursona.directory/@LiliaRoo](#)
- FA: hukaulaba
- Weasyl: liliaroo
- Bluesky: @liliaroo.furwaukee.org
- Mastodon: @hukaulaba@transfur.social
- Discord, Telegram: liliaroo
- Email: hukaulaba@gmail.com

*Join furbanism and transit on Telegram!*

<https://trainfur.group>

