

MORE INFORMATION

The internet is by far the largest source of Critical Mass information in the world.

WORLDWIDE LINKS

The Worldwide Critical Mass Hub
<http://pobox.com/bluejay/cm>

San Francisco
www.critical-mass.org

Chicago
www.tezcat.com/~jredd/cmchi.html

London
www.ipg.umds.ac.uk/a.d.smith/cm

CRITICAL MASS AUSTRALIA

<http://home.hyperlink.net.au/~damon/cm/australia>

The UnOfficial Guide to Critical Mass Melbourne
www.vmore.org.au/~damon/cm

The Original Melbourne Critical Mass Website
www.ecr.unimelb.edu.au/~amorton/cmss.html

Critical Mass Sydney
www.nccnsw.org.au/member/cmss

CRITICAL
MASS

Critical Mass :n. 1. The minimum amount or number required for something to happen, begin, etc. 2. The minimum number of people required to participate in any event, or social action safely, or group-oriented social reality. 3. a bicycle ride in which a large number of cyclists congregate on a city street in order to promote bicycles' equal access to the road. The large numbers are effective in protecting themselves from automobiles.

Critical Mass is, not only, a major environmental movement, wherein the "eco-friendliness" of the bicycle is recognised and re-inforced, but also highly analytical of issues pertaining to road safety and the rights to equal access of public space, wherein motorists, cyclists and pedestrians, should be able to co-exist in the street-scape environment with minimum conflict and maximum cohesion.

Please recycle this sheet of paper, or pass it onto another reader .



Critical Mass in Melbourne happens on the last working Friday of every month at 5:30PM.

We meet at the State Library on the corner of Swanston and LaTrobe Street.

CRITICAL
MASS



**"We're not blocking traffic,
We ARE Traffic!"**

San Francisco September 1992

A small but determined group of 45 cyclists decided that they'd finally had enough. Enough of the total disregard for cyclists rights, enough of the lack of regard for their safety and enough of the damage that cars were doing to their city

In an act of defiance and celebration, they took to the streets. Not to protest, not to campaign, but simply to ride.

Months passed and similar rides started in nearly 100 cities around the world, what started out as a simple act of defiance, has led to one of the largest social movements of this century.

The monthly worldwide celebration of bicycle culture. Where hundreds upon thousands of cyclists take to the streets,

To ride . . .

This was the first Critical Mass.

CRITICAL MASS

Next time you go for a walk or ride, take a few minutes to look around and picture your city free of cars. What would the streets be filled with? What would your city smell like, sound like and feel like, without cars? If you can envision a street filled with hundreds of bicycles, casually riding down your street, breathing clean air, the serenity broken only by conversations between riders, and the occasional chime of a bell, then you've just pictured Critical Mass.

"Critical Mass is a glimpse of what life could be like. Critical Mass is about people-powered machines in a people-oriented society."

As cyclists, we struggle every day to ride amongst the craziness of motor traffic, to fight the noise and pollution, the blare of car horns, the speeding and general disrespect for cyclists. To say we are second class road users is an understatement. Many motorists see us as having no real right to share the road. Many even continue with the archaic idea that we're riding a bike because we can't afford a car.

Critical Mass is not an exercise to annoy motorists. The point is to show everyone - commuters, pedestrians and residents that there is a better way around. Once people see how much fun cycling can be, and how much safer and more pleasant it makes their streets, the thinking behind our car-oriented transport policies will be challenged.

Every individual has their own reasons for attending a Critical Mass. You may just enjoy riding your bike and want to meet others who do as well. Critical Mass is a fun ride with friends; it's a show of strength for cyclists in a group large enough not to feel threatened by cars; it shows motorists an alternative, environmentally cooler, healthier, inexpensive and appropriate form of city transport.

"Critical Mass is, something different. A space where people do not have ideas or actions imposed on them, where people can take an active, rather than passive role in building a livable future, in however small a way."

Critical Mass is a new kind of political space, not about protesting but about celebrating our vision of preferable alternatives, most obviously in this case bicycling over the car culture. Importantly we wanted to build on the strong roots of humor, disdain for authority, decentralization, and self-direction that characterize our local political cultural history.

The state of urban transportation is in critical condition. Cars, designed for high speed highway trips, are trapped in our cities. They are dangerous, injuring and killing pedestrians cyclists, not to mention each other, spewing noxious odors and creating sound pollution. Cars weren't made for cities. Why are we designing cities for cars?

People who drive cars are not monsters. They have all been pedestrians, most have ridden bikes. Our tactics must show that the device and not the driver is opposed. They believe that automobiles are essential, but we represent life without them. Our refusal to remain unnoticed may cause them to examine their choice and our example will give them an alternative.

"Cyclists should expect and demand safe accommodation on our public roads, just as does every other user. Nothing more is expected. Nothing less is acceptable."

Critical Mass is a density. It displaces automobiles by concentrating bicycles so thickly no car will fit, so if a gap as big as a car appears ahead of you, ride into the middle of it and call over a friend. Critical Mass is also a social space, a public act of self-acknowledgment by bicyclists who are at the cutting edge of challenging the transit priorities of this society, and by extension, most of the priorities of this culture in general. Having no clear agenda, Critical Mass is a monthly organized coincidence. We are all simply riding home. Together!



This century nearly twice as many Australians have died in road crashes (159 000) than in all wars combined (89 000).

The worst year was 1970, when nearly 4 000 people died on Australian roads. That's more than twice the total number of Australian military personnel killed in action since the end of World War Two. (A total of just over 1 600 Australians died in Malaya, Korea, Malaysia and Vietnam.) Since 1970 nearly 1 300 cyclists have been killed on Australian roads.

"Bikes are the most energy efficient form of transport ever invented, and the most appropriate mode of transport for the city."

Critical Mass is an organised coincidence. Rather, it's a disorganisation where nobody is in charge. The driving force behind people taking on responsibility and ensuring its future, is a desire to promote Critical Mass and bicycling culture.

