



Critical Mass Unofficial Cartography Tips

Who decides where Critical Mass rides go?

Anyone can make a map and distribute copies at Daley Plaza before a ride. If there is more than one map, each map-maker usually stands on the Picasso pedestal, promotes his or her map, and a vote is taken. In actuality, there are rarely more than a couple of route proposals, since map creation requires considerable time and effort. Sometimes the maps have "themes," such as the Rat Patrol Alley Ride, Bike the Ike, May Day Progressive History Tour, etc.

-- from FAQ's at www.ChicagoCriticalMass.org

Mapmaking Tips from Veteran Cartographers

- ◆ The mass is super social. Seek out streets with heavy pedestrian traffic, sidewalk cafes, and high population density. Avoid industrial areas, hospitals, etc.
- ◆ Turn frequently, at least every half mile. Turns help to keep the mass together, make the ride more interesting, and keep us from messing up CTA bus schedules.
- ◆ Ride lengths and speeds vary; typically 5 mph and 2-3 hours, shorter in winter.
- ◆ The mass loves riding up hills or bridges (that afford vistas of the magnitude of the ride), into tunnels, and under viaducts. Seek 'em out. But watch out for metal-grate bridges that cause consternation to many.
- ◆ Have a defined destination: a party, beach, restaurant district, park, festival, polka club, etc.
- ◆ Most riders live on the north side. If you head north, then turn back south, many people will defect and head home.
- ◆ Try something new-- Show everyone your favorite sights, take everyone past your favorite hidden urban treasures.
- ◆ Rounding triangles (e.g. The "Polish Triangle" @ Ashland/Division/Milwaukee and the triangle in the Rush Street restaurant district (N of Oak) is Big Fun. The same thing can be done w/ other self-crossing routes (like going around a block); but triangles are fun because everyone can see one another.
- ◆ Splitting the ride takes lots of work and planning but can have a big fun payoff.
- ◆ Think "Theme". If the route has some unifying theme (even if it's tenuous at best) makes it memorable. People will talk about a "Masters and Johnson Ride" (for example) rather than the "October 2004" ride.
- ◆ Make at least a couple hundred copies of your route, get to the Plaza early and pass 'em out. If there are other proposed routes, tout the merits of your map prior to the route vote.
- ◆ **Making the map is only half the work. You'll have to ride up at the front (preferably with a posse) and "guide" the mass along the map if you really want 'em to stick with it. Hijacking the route is a favorite pastime for some riders.**
- ◆ Don't put too much stock into what veteran mapmakers have to say . . .



Henry Ford
