

Critical Mass Austin #21 - 3/31/23 Attendee Testimonials

The following 22 testimonials were obtained through direct messages, public social media posts, email, and through text messages. Original and redacted documentation is available as needed.

Experience of Critical Mass Austin Attendees

“What made me feel uncomfortable and unsafe was that the other cycling group was super loud, all over the place and rode right into traffic not caring about their surroundings. One rider also almost crashed into me during the ride.” (Female 01 Ride Bikes Austin Ride Leader/8-Month Member, Critical Mass Austin/7-Month Member)

“I could tell things were off right after rollout because of the constant whistling. But we didn’t have any bad interactions. We stayed pretty far back in the procession.” (Male 01 Ride Bikes Austin Leader/12-Month Member, Critical Mass Austin/14-Month Member)

“The main incident I remember was as we were passing 35 someone from the other group got in front of a car and was hitting it/yelling at the driver.” (Female 02 Ride Bikes Austin Ride Leader/10-Month Member, Critical Mass Austin/7-Month Member)

“I was uncomfortable, mostly I just heard a couple of guys keep yelling how much they hated Rba.” (Female 03 Ride Bikes Austin Ride Leader/11-Month Member, Critical Mass Austin/8-Month Member)

“I’m not feeling safe and that’s how I’m feeling right now. I’m not feeling very safe like all of this really triggered shit in me. Sorry to say that but it’s true I mean I know I got trauma crap going on, but you know it’s like that night with them being like they were, I was just like really. 🙄 I feel like I’m being like really bombarded on social media with them... 🙄” (Female 08 Ride Bikes Austin/7-Month Member, Critical Mass Austin/7-Month Member)

“When we went on the critical mass ride, there were riders who were going against the group which made it difficult to ride safely. I notice when we got to the feeder road they began to go into all 4 lanes instead of staying close to the group which affected the safety of the other riders. My friend was also on skates and the outside group almost ran into her and other riders several times. Critical mass rides are usually a place of community but the other riders made it feel unsafe for the group as they kept weaving in and out of people and going in the opposite direction through the crowd which led to unnecessary confusion.” (Female 09 Ride Bikes Austin/6-Month Member, Critical Mass Austin/6-Month Member)

“I felt uncomfortable, because some SCA riders rode unpredictably, I heard [Name Removed: Female 1 Social Cycling Austin Ride Leader/9-Year Member, 5:30 CMATx Organizer-Ride Leader/9-Year Member] shouting "Go Ride Bikes Austin", as though to antagonize us. [Name Removed: Male 03 Social Cycling Austin Rider Leader/10-Year Member, 5:30 CMATx Rider/10-Year Member], never once apologizing for laughing at RBA pics I'm tagged in on fb, held his arms in an open hug gesture to me. I was standing far

away and didn't reciprocate. I was worried about how they would treat you and [Name Removed].” (Female 10 Ride Bikes Austin Ride Leader-Volunteer/21-Month Member, Critical Mass Austin Ride Leader/21-Month Member)

“The harassment was uncalled for! The members from the other group were swerving all around. The worst part is when they would call “rolling” when our ride leader would call “stopping” or when they would call the opposite turn of what she said. One time, I thought she said straight but apparently it was a turn and I almost got in her way. I would have felt awful if I was the reason she crashed! Also, the other bikers would get really close to incoming traffic. I don't need to see anyone die!” (Male 02 Ride Bikes Austin Ride Leader/8-Month Member, Critical Mass Austin/7-Month Member)

“I overheard some guy on a bmx bike talking sh*t to another rider about RBA. Don't remember the face or [exact] content but it was pretty trashy. Whoever he was whining to didn't seem very interested in hearing it!” (Male 03 Ride Bikes Austin/21-Month Member, Critical Mass Austin/18-Month Member)

“On Friday night at the critical mass I felt unsafe for myself and other members of the group, the other party that joined us did not respect the leader's instructions and they were too close to other riders and almost clipped some of them. There was about 4-6 people at the front of the ride continuously trying to block the leader, yelling "Rolling" as we were coming to a stop to let traffic by, and one of them almost got hit by a car, that puts other members of the group in danger. You had those same people trying to do wheelies while in the middle of the crowd and came way too close to causing an accident, again its unsafe.” (Male 04 Ride Bikes Austin Ride Leader/12-Month Member, Critical Mass Austin/3-Month Member)

“I felt incredibly uncomfortable having riders from the other Critical Mass Ride attend our ride due to their reckless behavior. Several were performing wheelies, swerving into oncoming traffic, and disrespecting the ride leader.” (Male 05 Ride Bikes Austin Organizer-Ride Leader/22-Month Member, Critical Mass Austin Organizer-Ride Leader/24-Month Member)

“I know people got mad and left because we were just going in circles and there might've been some people a little over intoxicated which is never good for the overall safety of everyone. I didn't notice the drunk people till we stopped and I think most of them might've been from out of town. I didn't recognize any of them.” (Male 06 Ride Bikes Austin Volunteer/7-Month Member, Critical Mass Austin Volunteer/24-Month Member)

“I felt they came off as really aggressive for no reason, everything felt tense initially and then some of them was riding really recklessly.” (Male 07 Ride Bikes Austin Ride Leader-Volunteer/23-Month Member, Critical Mass Austin/24-Month Member)

“[Name Removed: Male 03 Social Cycling Austin Rider Leader/10-Year Member, 5:30 CMATx Rider/10-Year Member] makes me feel unsafe because his behavior is erratic and I've heard him in the past talk about how he carries a gun and I've heard him threaten people with it at Social Cycling Austin rides so seeing him makes me feel unsafe. Part of the reason I quit going to SCA was hearing him threaten a car driver with a gun.

The guy [Name Removed: Male 02 Social Cycling Austin/3-Year Member, 5:30 CMATx Rider/1-Year Member] who was dancing and talking to himself at the dj booth came up and got right under my leg while I wasn't looking, and it really creeped me out. Other than that, I just felt generally unsafe because of everything I heard about how they tried to take over our ride." (Female 04 Ride Bikes Austin/4-Month Member, Critical Mass Austin/3-Month Member)

"We left. Yeah, I just couldn't keep doing circles like that and the rest of the route on skates. I get we had to do that because it was too dangerous to ride through downtown with those other people acting like that and I explained it to [Name Removed: Male] and [Name Removed: Female]. Also, me and [Name Removed: Male] were ready to fight people so probably not a good idea for us to stay." (Female 05 Ride Bikes Austin Ride Leader-Volunteer/16-Month Member, Critical Mass Austin Ride Leader/12-Month Member)

"I did not enjoy the night overall because I did not feel safe, listened to, or respected. When [CMATx] riders rode in front of the leader, I asked them to please stay behind her, and was ignored. I felt [CMATx] people getting too close to me when we were riding, and several times almost hitting me.

At a 4-way intersection before the store stop, the leader called for us to stop. Immediately after, a man said "don't stop!" And darted out into traffic. This was scary and when I looked to the left, I saw people laughing.

Then another man [Male 02 Social Cycling Austin/3-Year Member, 5:30 CMATx Rider/1-Year Member] rolled in front of the leader, blocking her way, and I told him to please move. He looked at me and said "you're not my f*cking mom."

It made me really angry and stressed to be in that environment, so much so that if they were there again acting that way, I'd choose not to attend. People being unsafe and stupid alone is fine, I guess, but when you act that way with a lot of people and cars are involved it is unsafe. Even if you put your life in danger only, you are forcing us to watch and feel anxiety and fear and it was extremely upsetting for me personally." (Female 06 Ride Bikes Austin Ride Leader-Volunteer/6-Month Member, Critical Mass Austin/3-Month Member)

"The behaviors I saw that made me uncomfortable. [CMATx] People were yelling aggressively at cars. In the convenience store parking lot people were yelling and acting out in a way that would have made it understandable for someone to call the cops on us. People weaving through the bike group in a reckless and aggressive way.

[CMATx] people [were] not being polite and respectful of those around them. Disrespecting the group as a whole and disrespecting the community and spaces we were taking up.

Mostly my issue was people making the group feel unfriendly. I love RBA because from the beginning I have been welcomed and included. RBA travels the roads in a safe way that makes me feel safe being a

part of the group. It sucked to feel like people were f*cking with that.” (Female 07 Ride Bikes Austin/6-Month Member, Critical Mass Austin/5-Month Member)

“I believed it to be a bit excessive that SCA came up behind us, then started aggressively weaving in and out of RBA members. Some SCA members started doing bike tricks in the middle of the group, and unfortunately one person did fall over. This could have caused more crashes but luckily everyone around was being observant.

I take the sweep position seriously, and when these large groups come together no one is really taking into account that someone is trying to look out for everyone who joins. It would be nice that when other groups join, they take a moment to recognize the group they’re joining and ask relevant safety questions for the well-being of all involved in the rides.

[Name Removed: Female] told me, but I didn’t immediately notice was [Name Removed: Male 03 Social Cycling Austin Rider Leader/10-Year Member, 5:30 CMATx Rider/10-Year Member] from SCA was walking around and pointing out bikes, to other [CMATx] ride members and it made [Name Removed: Female] feel very uncomfortable as if it was done with nefarious purposes in mind. And no point in time should we as a community after fear for our bikes or bike accessories surrounded by other community members.” (Male 08 Ride Bikes Austin Ride Volunteer/10-Month Member, Critical Mass Austin/11-Month Member; 7-year old child present on ride)

“I definitely felt uncomfortable, unsafe, and disappointed. There was a different energy about the critical mass ride from ones that I had previously attended. During the ride I overheard [CMATx] individuals say “I’m going to keep f*cking with them.” It seemed to be an [CMATx] outside group apart from critical mass and it felt like harassment.

Those people and others [from CMATx] really killed the fun and community of the ride. At another point during the ride, I got in between one of our riders and the [CMATx] group to try and help diffuse a situation. The [CMATx] rider immediately got aggressive and pointed me out to another in his [CMATx] group. After that I felt like a target and put more attention on my surroundings instead of trying to enjoy the critical mass ride. I was disappointed that other “adults” would make it a point to harass a community event just for their own fun. I know this is not how all Mass rides go, but it’d definitely be unfortunate if this was someone’s first time attending and their experience.” (Male 09 Ride Bikes Austin Ride Volunteer/6-Month Member, Critical Mass Austin/8-Month Member)

“The first group ride [Name Removed: Male], [Name Removed: Male] and I went on was with SCA before the ride started we were all hanging out getting to know everyone joking about if we were ever going to start riding when this dude walks up to us and my friend [Name Removed: Male] tries to shake his hand and he [Name Removed: Male 03 Social Cycling Austin Rider Leader/10-Year Member, 5:30 CMATx Rider/10-Year Member] says f*ck you and my friend [Name Removed: Male] replied with the same thing and he laughed and tried to play it off and introduced himself as the ride leader.

We all looked at each other and immediately recognized that this guy is super drunk and seems threatening so we distance ourselves when the ride is getting ready to take off. He’s so drunk he can’t

find his bike so we point it out to him and he says 'I wish somebody would try to steal my bike so I could shoot 'em.'

Later during the ride were at the back and he [Male 03 Social Cycling Austin Rider Leader/10-Year Member, 5:30 CMATx Rider/10-Year Member] rolls up and says I wish I could slap some punks for riding e-bikes tonight and I told him he should slap himself because he's the only punk and we rode off laughing. That was the first and only time we rode with them [Social Cycling Austin]. When we started at critical mass there was a smaller group some familiar faces and some new people but once we started riding we got a few blocks in and a group [CMATx] of obviously unfriendly people came doing wheelies speeding through the group and getting extremely close to other riders.

When we came to the stop sign, the road was blocked off by some of their riders and it immediately felt hostile and I see RBA as my family and anyone that rides with us are friends but that was not the case that night. Our ride leader was on her tall bike and [Name Removed: Male 03 Social Cycling Austin Rider Leader/10-Year Member, 5:30 CMATx Rider/10-Year Member] came speeding by me extremely close and then he got in front of [Name Removed: Female 12 Ride Bikes Austin Founder-Organizer-Ride Leader-Volunteer/24-Month Member, Critical Mass Austin Organizer-Ride Leader/24-Month Member] and stopped almost making her fall.

I felt myself get extremely defensive and like if I saw somebody do something to my friends that it would put me in a dangerous position. I would have to defend them and myself against a large group of unfriendly [CMATx] people, one of which I already know has mentioned he carries a firearm and wants to use it against somebody.

The vibe immediately shifted when the [CMATx] group showed up, so I chose to leave that night because I felt we were in danger and I didn't want to watch something happen and be in that position." (Male 10 Ride Bikes Austin Ride Volunteer/4-Month Member, Critical Mass Austin/4-Month Member)

"I am a member of RBA and I attended the Critical Mass ride on 3/31/23. I am reaching out to express my disappointment and concern for my safety during this ride caused by non-RBA [CMATx] members. These very disruptive [CMATx] people made the experience unsafe for all riders by performing dangerous and illegal moving violations, yelling and screaming profanities randomly and frightening our members attempting to enjoy themselves peacefully.

The ride started with these [CMATx] disruptive persons riding around and loudly and rudely screaming at other members in the [CMATx] group expressing their excitement to "f*ck shit up for RBA." This made me and several RBA members uncomfortable because we do not behave in this way when we ride together. We are a peaceful social bike group that rides our bikes, enjoying this magnificent city. The disruptive riders' behavior clearly did not reflect our values.

They continued to yell out profanities throughout the ride. They bragged about why they were present, stating that they dislike RBA and continuously yelled "F*ck RBA!" They performed dangerous tricks on their bikes nearly missing participants, creating an unsafe environment for peaceful riders. Additionally,

they rode against traffic several times! This caused cars to stop, move to the side and created dangerous conditions for automobiles and bike riders, alike.

One of the [CMATx] disruptive riders performed an unsafe wheelie, bumped an RBA member and actually caused the RBA member to fall off his bike and injure himself. This was the last straw for me. Several members left the ride early fearful for their safety and I too stopped riding as it became too dangerous to ride near this other group of [CMATx] men.

This was not the first time that we have experienced harassment and threats to public safety like this with this [CMATx] group of dangerous riders. I moved to this city to engage in a more peaceful, safe and unique way of life that aligns with my lifestyle. This group of [CMATx] men challenge my right to pursue a safe environment in the city of Austin. RBA has always supported a safe space where all peaceful riders can come together and enjoy each other's company. These [CMATx] outliers are not a part of RBA and are plaguing this city with their ridiculous and obscene behaviors. They have made a practice of harassing peaceful, law-abiding local riders and have publicly demonstrated their angst by breaking traffic laws and creating unsafe conditions for cyclists and other road users in Austin.

I am writing this statement in hopes that the City of Austin takes notice of this and engages in practices that will stop this type of harassment and unsafe road conditions for its citizens." (Male 11 Ride Bikes Austin Ride Volunteer/9-Month Member, Critical Mass Austin/5-Month Member)

Experience of Critical Mass Austin Organizers

“As we departed from the start of the ride, I was startled by [Male 08 Social Cycling Austin/4-Year Member, 5:30 CMATx/2-Year Member], when he rode up next to me on my left side and made a sudden loud whooping/yelling sound, while looking directly into my face. He continued riding erratically enough for me to feel agitated by his repeated loud whooping and hollering. This unsettling and annoying behavior has been repeated on other rides. He started this annoying behavior after I requested that he not ride into oncoming traffic during our 4/29/22 Critical Mass ride. In response, he became irate because he did not like being addressed by ME and he yelled “nigga” in my face over ten times in retaliation. This prompted several riders to intervene to try to help calm him down. (witnessed)

I witnessed [Male 02 Social Cycling Austin/3-Year Member, 5:30 CMATx Rider/1-Year Member] stop our ride leader at an intersection, by placing himself directly in front of her. I also witnessed CMATx members block all lanes of traffic including the middle of the intersection twice. They would not allow motorists, our ride leader, or any of us to pass until they decided to clear the intersection.

I witnessed CMATx members riding alarmingly too close to our ride leader twice, which caused our members (men and women) to come up front to create a safe barrier of protection between her and the aggressive CMATx members. I witnessed a CMATx member pop a wheelie behind my friend and then spin out of control. His front wheel missed her spine by less than ½ inch. Sadly, this guy simply sped away laughing, not even acknowledging the full situation and possible consequences of his reckless actions.

I noticed about half of the riders left by the middle of the ride, due to the presence of this aggressive group. I witnessed riders from the other group riding into on-coming traffic and playing chicken with on-coming traffic.

I witnessed the negative impact on the vibe at the Critical Mass after-party. Several of our regular riders that arrived late quickly noticed that the vibe was “on edge” and not normal. Our late arriving riders wanted to know “who are those people” Our after-party is always a joyous and vibrant community celebration. I received a complaint from a female rider regarding being placed in an uncomfortable position, by a CMATx male member. RBA organizers made sure she made it safely into her vehicle. The DJ was concerned about his equipment, due to erratic and uncontrolled body movements of [Name Removed: Male 02 Social Cycling Austin/3-Year Member, 5:30 CMATx Rider/1-Year Member]. I had to create a barrier between him and the DJ table to prevent any damage to the equipment. I had to constantly replace the barrier, due to [Name Removed: Male 02 Social Cycling Austin/3-Year Member, 5:30 CMATx Rider/1-Year Member] removing it and repeatedly getting too close to the DJ table. He ignored all requests to stay behind the barrier. I didn’t appreciate the extra discarded trash left at the after-party. RBA Organizers normally collect less than half a bag of trash. But, we actually had to collect four bags of trash by the end of the night..not cool!!!

[Name Removed: Male 02 Social Cycling Austin/3-Year Member, 5:30 CMATx Rider/1-Year Member] forced unwanted bear hugs on me that took a little effort to escape from. I had to tell him several times to stop grabbing my arm when I was replacing the barrier for the DJ table. He ignored all my requests

for him to stop touching. This same individual is currently featured in a video on the CMATx Facebook page tearing up an RBA sticker and saying "Fuck RBA". " (Female 11 Ride Bikes Austin Founder-Organizer-Ride Leader-Volunteer/24-Month Member, Critical Mass Austin Organizer-Ride Leader/24-Month Member)

"I was the designated ride leader at Critical Mass Austin #22 - 4/28/23.

I didn't know something was wrong until we exited the trail near Robert Martinez Jr. and felt a gush of wind when [Name Removed: Male 03 Social Cycling Austin Rider Leader/10-Year Member, 5:30 CMATx Rider/10-Year Member] rode by close enough that I could have been knocked off my tall bike if he'd been a few inches closer. I endured similar experiences by him and another person that arrived with CMATx two more times before the ride was over. My heart rate and adrenaline shot up, but I didn't have much bandwidth to get scared about being crashed into because I was more concerned about the safety of everyone that I was leading.

I was grateful when some of our regular riders later formed a buffer around me.

I was faced with hostility and disrespect from the CMATx riders. I did not have time to feel fearful, because I had to be strategic and make timely decisions to help reduce the increased threat to the safety of our riders, motorists, and pedestrians. I realized that it was unsafe to lead our group along our predetermined route through downtown and south of the river because it was apparent that CMATx riders were intent on playing chicken with on-coming traffic. I basically put the training wheels back on for the entire group by not crossing through intersections with traffic lights, avoiding 2-lane roads with a stripe down the middle, and interjecting multiple subsequent turns so that we remained within a 2-mile radius. Keeping the ride with-in a 2-mile radius helped prevent any attempts to split our riders up, while empowering anyone wanting to get back to the starting location early to do so easily.

I was blocked from proceeding at two intersections. The first was at Haskell and Chicon and the second was at Holly and Waller. The blockade at Haskell was disconcerting because [Name Removed: Male 03 Social Cycling Austin Rider Leader/10-Year Member, 5:30 CMATx Rider/10-Year Member] was posted up directly across the street glaring at me while other people I didn't recognize were standing in the middle of the intersection and at each road. It was awkward but it did give me a few minutes to come up with a plan of action to reduce the negative impact of what might turn out to be a dangerous situation.

The second time it happened was more aggressive because [Male 02 Social Cycling Austin/3-Year Member, 5:30 CMATx Rider/1-Year Member] planted himself and his bike directly in my path at the intersection of Holly and Waller. I was trying to guide our group safely while east and westbound motorists started piling up because of some of the CMATx riders who were blocking the full intersection. He also physically restrained me in unwanted bear hugs twice over the course of the evening. I had to use quite a bit of force to get him off me. I felt disgusted by his embrace and annoyed with his sense of entitlement. The 2nd time he grabbed me like that I became concerned for the safety of one of our regular male riders that witnessed the incident because his aggravation was visible. I had

to repeatedly request for [Name Removed: Male 02 Social Cycling Austin/3-Year Member, 5:30 CMATx Rider/1-Year Member] to give me space, to give the dj equipment space, and to back off in general throughout the night.

I felt a sense of pride when I saw how our regular riders conducted themselves in the face of unwarranted aggression. They maintained their composure, refused to be drawn into acts of violence, and helped look out for one another (and for me). I saw them being assertive and confident while navigating the challenges of seeing those they care about experiencing harassment and threats to their physical safety. Some of them empathetically and responsibly left early with some of our more vulnerable attendees while others held themselves accountable for ensuring the rest of us made it back safely. Some of our regular riders stayed extra late at the end helping to ensure that our friends that brought the skates and the music were able to depart without any issues related to their equipment.”
(Female 12 Ride Bikes Austin Founder-Organizer-Ride Leader-Volunteer/24-Month Member, Critical Mass Austin Organizer-Ride Leader/24-Month Member)