

Invitation to General Membership

Curbside as a co-op

Curbside* is a form of non-profit [cooperative](#). We chose this institutional form because it neatly straddles the commercial and the social, blurs the dichotomy of producer and consumer, and places control in the hands of the community it is designed to serve (rather than in the hands of funders or founders). Legally speaking, it has several classes of membership according to the various interests we expect members may have. The purpose of this “multi-stakeholder” structure is to facilitate a fair distribution of formal decision-making power, via board seats, amongst the members of each class. This will be especially important as Curbside grows. There is a “worker” class for employees and volunteers, a “land share” class for members who share land (e.g., boulevards), and a “general” class for gardeners and other contributors.

You’re invited to join Curbside as a General Member. We hope that the name “general” will be the least inspiring thing you encounter here.

* Incorporated as *Curbside Community Farms Cooperative* in the province of British Columbia.

What membership means for you

To own a share of Curbside is to legally own part of the organization. As a co-owner, you are entitled to help guide Curbside as it develops. Officially, you can serve on committees, vote in elections, run for board positions, and access Curbside’s financial reports. This legal aspect of membership is a safeguard to be exercised if mismanagement endangers the community you’ve become a part of. But more than that, we intend membership to be an **official invitation to participate in unofficial ways**; shaping the cooperative through what you bring to the community – the thing that truly confers ownership *in practice*.

About the *Rules* and this agreement

The institutional structure of Curbside is defined by its [Rules of Association](#) (or simply, *Rules*) – a primary document which all BC co-ops maintain. It covers things like how the board works, how general meetings work, and how member communication works, and includes points on financial practice, voting, and dispute resolution. The attached membership agreement includes excerpts from the *Rules* and makes frequent reference to them. It is these *Rules*, along with BC’s [Cooperative Association Act](#) (on which the *Rules* are based) that provide the legal backbone of Curbside and differentiate it from, say, a regular company.

About buying a share

A share of Curbside costs \$10. We chose that price with the goal of keeping it accessible while still requiring *some* thought. Shares are not meant to be revenue for Curbside – you can only buy a single one, and if you decide to leave, you get your \$10 back*. The price is symbolic. It's an acknowledgement of the value of the project and of your right to help shape it.

Aside from the purchase of a share, there are no financial implications associated with membership. Curbside's constitution as a non-profit prevents it from issuing any kind of patronage returns or dividends, and Curbside does not collect fees for membership.

The agreement below lays out your rights and responsibilities as a member. Please read it carefully and let us know if you have any questions.

* Subject to qualifications in our *Rules*.

Membership Agreement

This agreement covers your rights and responsibilities as a General Member, as well as Curbside's responsibilities to you. Its purpose is primarily to establish expectations. It does not override or replace Curbside's [Rules of Association](#) (available separately) or the province's [Cooperative Association Act](#), which together form the governing framework for Curbside and its members.

If you find anything to be unclear or have questions at any time, we encourage you to reach out – we will be *happy* to discuss.

General Member rights

As a General Member of Curbside, you are entitled to:

- **Participate** in Curbside's operations and governance;
- **Cast one vote** on all matters put to the membership at general meetings and receive fair notice of meetings;
- **Serve on committees** and run for positions on the board of directors;
- **Raise issues** or concerns relating to Curbside with its board and with other members;
- **Receive information** about Curbside's financial status and other important processes or decisions (e.g. resolutions);
- **Access the products, services, and programs** that Curbside provides, subject to availability and other reasonable limitations described in the *Rules of Association*.

General Member responsibilities

As a General Member of Curbside, you are responsible for making a genuine effort to:

- **Participate in the governance** of Curbside by attending general meetings, voting on decisions, asking questions, and participating on committees and/or the board;
- **Adhere to applicable policies** and procedures as set out by the board, to the best of your ability;
- **Support Curbside's operations** by using and/or contributing to its services (e.g., attending or facilitating workshops) and participating in community-building activities (e.g., potlucks, group fundraisers, volunteerism), within reason;

- **Treat other members, boulevard hosts, and neighbours with decency, dignity, and respect;**
- **Stay informed** about Curbside's operations and organizational capacity by, at a minimum, reading the annual review/report.

Curbside's responsibilities

Upon becoming a member, Curbside will be responsible for:

- **Providing you with notice of meetings** and keeping you informed about ways that you can participate in the cooperative;
- Maintaining a **transparent and efficient system of decision-making** that is inclusive of the membership and supportive of the vision of the cooperative;
- Conducting business, through the board and/or staff, that is in **the best interest of the cooperative and its members**;
- **Providing education** about how to uphold your responsibilities;
- Using any financial contributions you make in an **effective, responsible, and transparent manner**.

Leaving the cooperative

- Members have the **right to withdraw from the cooperative** and to redeem their membership share in exchange for its original dollar value, subject to Curbside's *Rules of Association*.
- Membership **may be terminated by Curbside** in accordance with its *Rules of Association* and the *Cooperative Association Act*.
 - In this situation, members have the opportunity to appeal the termination in accordance with the *Rules of Association*.

Member declaration

I, the undersigned, understand and agree to the rights and responsibilities described above and acknowledge that I have had the opportunity to review Curbside's *Rules of Association*. I understand that the purchase of one General Member Share (\$10) is a condition of membership.

Name (please print):

Signature:

Date:

Board declaration

I, the undersigned, acknowledge and affirm the rights and responsibilities described above and approve this application for membership on behalf of the board of Curbside Community Farms Cooperative.

Board member name:

Signature:

Date:
