



URBAN-X BY MINI

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TOP SMART CITIES STARTUP ACCELERATOR URBAN-X BY MINI AND URBAN US GRADUATES FIFTH COHORT

Startups in accelerator present technological solutions for improving city life; event initiates fundraising process with investors in New York and California

BROOKLYN, NY – April 30, 2019 – [URBAN-X](#), the leading accelerator for startups reimaging city life, today graduated its fifth cohort of startup companies at an event held at their Brooklyn, NY headquarters.

URBAN-X is part of the Innovation and Strategy practice at MINI, and partners with venture firm, Urban.Us. The seven startups in URBAN-X's fifth startup class showcased new hardware, software and IoT platforms to an audience of potential investors, customers and public-sector leaders.

The startups in URBAN-X Cohort 05 are working on solutions to some of the biggest problems cities face around the world, like increasing access to electric vehicles and sustainable transportation, improved construction site productivity, faster and cheaper steel reinforced concrete structures, decreasing GHG emissions from cooling and heating, improved waste management and reducing clothing waste. Demo Day 05 kicked off a series of initial investor meetings the startups will have with top venture capitalists in technology hubs including New York, San Francisco and Palo Alto.

Recognizing that the evolution of cities is inclusive of mobility, but that it also extends to interlinked domains, MINI launched URBAN-X in 2016 as part of their Innovation and Strategy practice focused on improving city life. URBAN-X now has 37 companies in its portfolio and engages with the brightest minds using technology to solve for some of the most complex challenges of city life – from mobility, energy consumption, infrastructure, housing, food waste, water and more.

“We’re thrilled to work with this group of innovative entrepreneurs who are rethinking how technology can solve for complex issues that cities everywhere are facing,” said **VP of Brand Strategy and Innovation at MINI, Esther Bahne**. “MINI’s investment in URBAN-X builds on our commitment to agile innovation and provides a platform to inspire creativity and collaboration to build meaningful solutions that improve life in cities in unexpected ways.”

Today’s event was an opportunity for Cohort 05 startups not only to seek additional investment to grow their companies, but also to demonstrate the product and business developments made during URBAN-X’s 20-week accelerator program.

Formally known as The Free Ride, the company, which partners with cities and advertisers to provide app-enabled, free electric-vehicle shuttle services in dense city centers, at Demo Day today unveiled its new brand: **Circuit**. The company also announced its expansion into Hollywood, Florida through a partnership with the City and the re-launch of its service in Williamsburg, Brooklyn thanks to a brand partnership with Runa. Circuit already serves more than two million customers across 19 cities and is quickly expanding to provide city goers with an innovative solution to the ‘first-mile/last-mile problem’ plaguing busy downtown areas.

“Cohort 05 is an incredibly impressive group of creative and innovative entrepreneurs who are driven by a passion to improve our cities” said **URBAN-X Managing Director, Micah Kotch**. “We’re excited to continue to support this group and see what comes next for these inspiring teams.”

URBAN-X has a proven track record in helping early-stage companies secure funding from leading investors. In fact, 85% of URBAN-X companies have gone on to raise their next round of capital.

“Today marks an exciting milestone for each of the companies in Cohort 05 -- and it’s just the beginning,” said **Mark Paris, Partner at Urban Us**. “We’re inspired by the creativity and drive of these teams and are thrilled to continue to help bring their products to market at scale and positively impact city life.”

In addition to investments that URBAN-X and Urban.Us made as part of the accelerator program, funds and individuals that have invested in URBAN-X portfolio companies include Fred Wilson, Brad Burnham, Edgar Bronfman Jr., BMW i Ventures, Draper Associates, Fontinalis Partners, Ekistic Ventures, Wireframe Ventures, Fifth Wall Ventures, Samsung NEXT, Story Ventures, Kairos, and UL Ventures.

The full list of Cohort 05 companies include:

- [Circuit](#) (formerly The Free Ride) – Circuit is an all-electric, short-range, ridesharing company providing city-goers with free, sustainable transportation.

- [Borrow](#) – Borrow is bridging the gap between leasing, ownership and on-demand ridesharing by providing short term electric vehicle leasing.
- [Thrilling](#) – Thrilling is the first dedicated e-commerce platform for vintage and second-hand stores, reducing carbon, waste and water footprints.
- [Treau](#) – Treau is building advanced climate control systems to bring sustainable, comfortable, and efficient cooling and heating to buildings everywhere.
- [GreenQ](#) – GreenQ is creating truck-based waste analytics systems to improve logistics, diversion and recycling.
- [Toggle](#) – Toggle is building an automated process that utilizes software and industrial robotics to reduce costs and increase productivity of construction projects.
- [Buildstream](#) (formerly GearBuddy) – Buildstream uses IoT and machine learning to digitize every aspect of construction, including equipment like bulldozers and trucks, to make construction more efficient, effective and safer.

A live stream of the event will be made available through Futurism and its YouTube page. Click [here](#) to join at 10:00 a.m. ET.

URBAN-X Cohort 06 will launch this summer and will be the first URBAN-X class to receive an [increased investment](#) of \$150,000 per startup, up from \$100,000. URBAN-X is also accepting applications for its next class of startups, Cohort 07, launching winter 2019. Early-stage companies interested can apply [here](#) until October 1, 2019.

About URBAN-X

URBAN-X is the leading accelerator for technology and design startups reimagining city life. Founded by MINI, URBAN-X helps early-stage companies from all over the world address modern urban challenges across sectors like transport, real estate, local government, food, water, waste and utilities.

Twice a year, URBAN-X selects up to 10 startups for its competitive, five-month program of product and business development. The accelerator invests \$150,000 in each startup and puts them to work with a dedicated, in-house team of engineering, design and business experts; involves working trips to Munich, San Francisco and other major cities; and culminates in founders presenting to an audience of investors, thought leaders and media.

URBAN-X has a global reach unparalleled by any other urbantech accelerator and the startups have access to a network of over 2,000 partners around the world, including entrepreneurs, investors and public-sector leaders, who have volunteered to support the founders through the URBAN-X program. During the year, URBAN-X leadership

visits cities worldwide -- in the U.S., Europe, Asia, and beyond -- to meet entrepreneurs and individuals shaping the future of urban life.

URBAN-X is based in Greenpoint, Brooklyn at A/D/O, a creative space founded by MINI and dedicated to exploring the boundaries of design. Find URBAN-X on Twitter & Instagram at @urbanxaccel and on Facebook at facebook.com/urbanxaccel.

About MINI Innovation

MINI is an independent brand of the BMW Group. As an iconic and emotional urban brand, MINI has taken a unique approach to innovation, carrying forward its roots as an innovator of efficient urban mobility while maximizing creative use of space. Although MINI benefits from BMW Group technological advancements, including those in autonomous, connected, electrified and shared segments, MINI has evolved its thinking and product development across a unique range of areas that interest with mobility and extend beyond the car. MINI Innovation is focused on the future of electrified mobility, impactful design, urban living and the important interplay between these areas. The practice includes: A/D/O, URBAN-X, MINI Living and MINI Fashion.

About Urban Us

[Urban Us](#) is the leading early stage investor for startups re-imagining cities. Cities will soon be home to 70% of the global population, who now face unprecedented risk from climate change. Our 2014 and 2016 funds achieve top quartile performance for investors while also generating substantial public benefits. Urban Us recently launched our third fund to continue our focus on founders reimagining cities.

The Urban Us platform includes the Urban Us network, a resource for urbantech focused founders, investors, partners and customers. URBAN-X, in partnership with MINI, supports early stage teams with company building and fundraising. Perl Street serves teams needing access to non-equity capital for project finance, asset finance and inventory finance. Our newest partnerships will help startups access partners and customers in Asia.

Before Urban Us, the Urban Us team had three exits and ran a VC fund and municipal finance for Citi. Notable investments before Urban Us include Trialpay, Blue Bottle Coffee, Refinery29 and ZocDoc. The Urban Us portfolio includes 53 investments across real estate, infrastructure, energy, water, waste, food, transportation and public administration including health and security. Notable investments include, Bowery Farming, Starcity, Mark43, One Concern, Future Motion, Skycatch, BRCK and Rachio.

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Journalist notes: Media information about MINI and its products is available to journalists on-line at www.miniusanews.com.