

SUCCESS STORY

Lyft combats climate change with every ride

Funding emission reduction projects and catalyzing change in transportation



Lyft, the global ride-hailing service, cares deeply about their impact on the environment and the communities they serve. In 2017, Lyft announced their 2025 climate impact goals, which include moving to autonomous electric vehicles powered by renewable energy and reducing overall CO₂ emissions in the transportation sector. As part of delivering on their Green Cities Initiative in support of these goals, Lyft partnered with 3Degrees to look for both near-term and longer-term opportunities to reduce their environmental impact.

Key challenges

Emissions from the transportation sector are a stubborn problem. Petroleum-based fuels like gasoline are deeply embedded in our vehicle and fuel distribution infrastructure, resulting in large quantities of carbon dioxide and other tailpipe emissions. Lyft's long-term vision for addressing this is an all-electric vehicle fleet powered by 100% renewable electricity – an ambitious goal that will take time to accomplish. In the short-term, Lyft sought to take immediate steps to address its environmental impact in a relevant and meaningful way.

Lyft set an aggressive goal – to offset emissions from all Lyft rides worldwide. In its initial engagement, Lyft wanted to be intentional about the projects in which they supported, placing a high priority on projects in the transportation sector, near their major markets or in some other way relevant to Lyft's business.

How we helped

In collaboration with Lyft's sustainability team, 3Degrees designed a program that would meet the above goals and have the flexibility to evolve and grow with Lyft's business. Lyft's initial investment used carbon offsets as a tool to fund emission reduction projects that result in tangible changes in the way parts of the transportation sector operate. The program also supported projects that help address other environmental impacts from vehicle use, such as water and non-GHG air pollutants.



LYFT'S GOALS:



Long-term: electrify Lyft fleet and power with renewable energy



Short-term: offset emissions from all rides



Reduce over a million metric tons of carbon annually

OUR APPROACH:

- + Develop a portfolio of carbon offset projects tied to Lyft's industry and geographic footprint
- + Fund high-quality, proprietary projects in the transportation sector
- + Establish a plan to fund new projects that align with Lyft's business objectives
- + Provide on-going expertise and advice to support Lyft's Green Cities Initiative

The key elements of the initial Lyft program designed by 3Degrees:

- ✓ **Environmental integrity** was the most important aspect of the program design and a core element of every carbon offset sold by 3Degrees. Environmental integrity can generally be broken down into two main components: (a) “additionality,” the notion that the emission reductions would not have been achieved without the funding from carbon offset sales, and (b) rigorous and conservative quantification of the actual emission reductions achieved. All 3Degrees projects are registered under internationally recognized standards maintained by not-for-profit environmental organizations, including the [American Carbon Registry \(ACR\)](#), [Climate Action Reserve \(CAR\)](#), and [Verified Carbon Standard \(VCS\)](#). These standards require that project emission reductions are monitored and quantified on a regular basis and that this quantification and project additionality are independently verified by accredited third parties.



“3Degrees’ ability to develop unique emission reduction projects with a high level of environmental integrity made them a natural fit for us. Their depth of experience, analytical rigor, and creativity helped us craft a program that can change over time and as our needs evolve.”

SAM ARONS
Director of Sustainability, Lyft

PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

Carbon offsets catalyze real change in automotive manufacturing process

The Meridian Magnesium project was the largest component of Lyft’s initial portfolio. Located just outside of one of Lyft’s major markets, Meridian manufactures magnesium-based automotive parts that reduce emissions during the manufacturing process and help lightweight vehicles and improve vehicle fuel efficiency.

Lyft’s support helped emission reductions at Meridian’s Michigan manufacturing facility. This [project](#) required an upfront capital investment by Meridian as well as a change in Meridian’s manufacturing process that, while reducing greenhouse gas emissions, is more expensive and

less efficient than the previous process. Carbon offset sales are the only source of revenue for this project. Without it, Meridian would have no motivation to operate this project.

Meridian was the first magnesium auto parts manufacturer to undertake this change and helped establish a new offset methodology that could be used by all magnesium part manufacturers. The project was just successfully re-validated by [NSF International](#) under the Verified Carbon Standard, affirming the scale and scope of the project’s real and permanent climate impact.

Now, based on Meridian’s demonstrated ability to implement this change and fund it with proceeds from offset sales, 3Degrees is discussing similar projects with two other magnesium producers that have not yet made the switch.

- ✓ **Reductions in transportation sector emissions** played a major role in the project portfolio. Initially, this included emission reduction projects in automotive manufacturing and waste oil recycling, and in the medium term could include newer project types like vehicle electrification. Projects like these have a direct connection to the automotive supply chain (and Lyft's Scope 3 emissions). Offset funding acts as an incentive or catalyst for actors in these industry segments to implement practice changes that are cleaner and more sustainable.
- ✓ **Positive impacts on Lyft communities** take the form of social and environmental co-benefits (apart from climate benefits) in and around the markets that Lyft serves. For example, land use projects like forestry offer important air and water quality benefits that are more localized in nature than greenhouse gas benefits. Similarly, renewable power projects like wind energy help displace coal-fired power generation, which in addition to CO₂ also emit mercury into the air and ultimately the regional water supply.

Leveraging 3Degrees' experience in transportation and our proprietary project portfolio, the majority of Lyft's initial investment supported one-of-a-kind projects in the transportation sector that have a demonstrated impact and the potential for scalability. This enabled Lyft to fund immediate emission reductions, like the Meridian magnesium automotive manufacturing project (see project spotlight below), while paving the way for new projects that leverage this experience.

RESULTS FROM INITIAL EFFORT:

- + In 2018, Lyft offset the emissions from all rides across the globe. This included emissions created while a passenger is in the vehicle and also those created while a driver is en-route to pick up a passenger.
- + Lyft's voluntary offset program was one of the largest in the U.S. and among the top 10 in the world.
- + All offset projects were located in the U.S. and have local social and environmental benefits in or near Lyft's U.S. markets.
- + More than 75% of Lyft's initial investment funded emission reductions in the transportation sector from projects that are catalyzing change in the industry.

At 3Degrees, our business is our mission. We make it possible for businesses and their customers to take urgent action on climate change. As a certified B Corporation, we provide renewable energy and emission reduction solutions to Fortune 500 companies, utilities, universities, green building firms and other organizations. Headquartered in San Francisco, 3Degrees serves clients around the world.



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