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Tokyo's Kita City Set to Launch Its First Original Digital Local Currency in Fall 2026 and Selects "Pokepay" as the Platform

Digital Garage Group's Pocket Change Advances Cashless Adoption in the Local Economy Through Its Original E-Money Platform

Pocket Change Inc. (HQ: Tokyo; CEO: Shin Aoyama; "Pocket Change"), a group company of Digital Garage, Inc. (TSE Prime section: 4819; HQ: Tokyo; Representative Director, President Executive Officer and Group CEO: Kaoru Hayashi), which operates an original e-money issuance business, has been commissioned to undertake the Digital Local Currency Project that Tokyo's Kita City is launching this fiscal year with the aims of revitalizing industry within the city and solving local issues.

In connection with this digital local currency, the issuance of premium digital gift certificates is scheduled to begin in fall 2026. In preparation for the launch, recruitment of participating merchants among businesses in Kita City is scheduled to begin this summer.



Background

Since fiscal year 2024, Kita City has carried out a premium digital gift certificate program utilizing the PayPay payment app, with the goals of promoting cashless adoption and revitalizing the local economy. Through this program, the need emerged for a system that would allow more flexible configuration

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tailored to each initiative, greater ease of use for residents, participating merchants, and the city itself, and data collection and utilization by the issuer (Kita City).

Against this backdrop, Digital Garage and its group company Pocket Change have long collaborated to develop the app Hachi Pay^{*1}, the digital local currency of Shibuya City, Tokyo, contributing to Shibuya City's smart city initiatives. Drawing on that experience, the two companies put forward a proposal aimed at further economic revitalization in Kita City, and beyond that, more efficient municipal administration, leading to Pocket Change being commissioned for this project.

Initiatives of the Digital Garage and Pocket Change

In this project, the two companies plan to build an app dedicated to Kita City on the foundation of Pokepay, which has a substantial deployment track record including Hachi Pay. Through multiple wallet functions, the app will enable points to be awarded in line with volunteer activities and municipal programs. In addition to measures supporting economic revitalization, the system is designed to accommodate a variety of other municipal initiatives.

*1: "Hachi Pay" project has been commissioned by Shibuya City to KAYAC inc. which serves as the contracting entity.

About the Campaign

■ Fall 2026: Campaign with a Total Issuance Scale of 1.8 Billion Yen Planned

Under this project, arrangements are planned for fiscal year 2026 to make the service available not only to Kita City residents but also to those who work, study, or visit there. As part of this effort, a campaign with a total issuance scale of over 1.8 billion yen is planned for fall 2026, with arrangements designed to allow broad participation.

Comments

■ Kanako Yamada, Mayor of Kita City, Tokyo

In 2026, Kita City will mark the major milestone of its 80th anniversary. As a leading project to generate new vitality in this commemorative year, we are planning the "Kita City Digital Local Currency App." Rather than simply stimulating consumption, this is a mechanism that will be used by our residents as well as the many people who work, study, and visit in Kita City, creating a virtuous cycle of people and the economy within the community. Through this project, we hope to see Kita City develop into an even more vibrant community.

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■ **Kaoru Hayashi, Representative Director, President Executive Officer and Group CEO, Digital Garage, Inc.**

Through our collaboration with group company Pocket Change, Digital Garage has worked to build original e-money platforms for municipalities, educational institutions, and other clients, advancing the development of cashless infrastructure rooted in local communities. We recognize that the selection of our services for Kita City's digital local currency project reflects an evaluation of the knowledge and technology we have cultivated to date, as well as our Group's broader initiatives. Through this project, we hope to enhance convenience for the residents and businesses of Kita City while contributing to the revitalization of the local economy by promoting cashless adoption. Going forward, in collaboration with Pocket Change, we will continue to support regional digital transformation and the advancement of cashless payments by providing original e-money platforms to municipalities and other clients.

About the "Pokepay" Original E-Money Platform

Pokepay is a solution that allows businesses to issue their own original digital value and create digital wallets on consumers' smartphones, enabling use as a proprietary mobile payment method across a variety of online and offline scenarios.

Offered as a SaaS/platform-type service, Pokepay requires no initial development costs or development lead time and can be introduced quickly at a low implementation cost. Many of its core functions are provided as APIs and SDKs, making integration and embedding with external systems straightforward.

The platform supports digital transformation and cashless adoption, as well as customer acquisition and engagement, across stores, facilities, and communities—including house money and loyalty points, electronic shopping vouchers, and electronic coupon books for retailers, restaurants, commercial facilities, beauty salons, and membership facilities; digital local currencies and regional electronic points for municipalities and DMOs; and digital currencies used on e-commerce sites and in online communities.

As a local currency platform, Pokepay is used across communities of all sizes, including the digital local currency of Fukui Prefecture, Shibuya City's "Hachi Pay" digital local currency program, Maebashi's "Mebuku Pay" electronic local currency program, and the Asago Chamber of Commerce's "Asago Pay" electronic local currency.

Company Profiles

■ **Pocket Change Inc.**

Name: Pocket Change Inc.

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Head office: First Okada Bldg. 3F, 4-3-5 Shiba, Minato-ku, Tokyo

Representative: Shin Aoyama, CEO

Date founded: December 2015

Business:

- Development and provision of infrastructure and platform services that convert foreign and domestic cash into existing and new forms of e-money
- Development and operation of "Pokepay," an original e-money issuance platform
- Planning, development, and operation of hardware, software, and payment services that contribute to realizing a cashless society

URL: <https://www.pocket-change.jp/en/>

■ Digital Garage, Inc.

Name: Digital Garage, Inc.

Representative: Kaoru Hayashi, Representative Director, President Executive Officer and Group CEO

Head office: Digital Gate Bldg., 3-5-7 Ebisu Minami, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo

Shibuya PARCO DG Bldg., 15-1 Udagawa-cho, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo

Date founded: August 1995

Digital Garage, Inc. is the leading payment service provider in Japan. With the corporate purpose of "Designing 'New Context' for a sustainable society with technology," Digital Garage operates payment business services for various comprehensive payment platforms in Japan. Digital Garage also runs a marketing business providing one-stop solutions in both the digital and real worlds, as well as a startup investment and development business for approaching promising startups and technologies in Japan and overseas. Digital Garage is listed on the Tokyo Stock Exchange Prime Market (TSE Prime: 4819). For more on Digital Garage, visit garage.co.jp/en