



Staff Report

August 17, 2026 Council Workshop

Presenters: Police Chief Tina Jones and Administrative Services Director Jennifer Gorsuch

Time Estimate: 35 minutes

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BACKGROUND: House Bill 2015 was approved by the State Legislature and went into effect July of 2025. The bill provides two funding opportunities, a councilmanic sales tax and a grant opportunity to fund criminal justice needs. The sales tax, if approved, could provide an estimated \$500,000 to support police and court programs to improve safety in our community. This workshop will cover the sales tax for City Council discussion.

SUMMARY: The sales tax considerations include:

- The tax is .1% which translates to 10 cents in revenue for every \$100 in sales.
- The tax can be imposed by councilmanic action through June 30, 2028.
- If passed by the council, the sales tax is permanent.
- The tax can be stacked with other sales taxes and is not shared with other jurisdictions.
- The sales tax usage is for "criminal justice purposes" which is a broad use.
- To qualify, the police department must incorporate in-depth changes to several policies, including immigration, domestic violence, protection orders, firearms relinquishment, use of force, and more. Chief Jones has already drafted the policies and training needed to meet the grant and sales tax requirements.

The revenue can help support the additional needs and stresses for our police and courts. As our community grows, we add strain to our police and court systems. The funding can help offset some of those costs by providing steady revenue to support staff, equipment, contract support, and other criminal justice needs. One area where there is identified future costs is for indigent defense. The increasing legislative restrictions on indigent defense case loads is adding to the costs over time and will continue.

BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY: Our community is growing and we continue to experience additional unfunded mandates to the police and courts. This tax supports specific revenues for the police and courts to be able to help maintain a high level of safety in Camas. Costs for public safety services continue to rise and as a General Fund item, there are limited funding options. This tax will help support current and future public

safety needs so we can continue to provide a high level of service to our growing population.

STRATEGIC PLAN: This item is connected to the “Safe and Accessible Community” portion of our Strategic Plan. Being able to continue to maintain a safe community is critical, especially as the city grows.

POTENTIAL CHALLENGES: If the tax is not approved, we continue to face rising costs for police and court services with limited revenue options. In the future, this will lead to diminished ability to maintain a high level of service and safety will be impacted.

BUDGET IMPACT: This item is very connected to the budget, as it provides an opportunity to diversify revenues. It provides more funding to the city specific to criminal justice needs, which can help alleviate stress on the General Fund and provide opportunities in the future to fund more needed positions, equipment, contract staff, and more.

RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends moving this item forward to a vote on whether to approve a .1% sales tax for criminal justice purposes. If Council agrees to move this forward for consideration, an Ordinance will be brought to a future City Council meeting for consideration.