



FOR BUYERS MOVING OUT OF MANHATTAN · BROOKLYN · QUEENS · THE BRONX · HOBOKEN · JERSEY CITY

Moving to the Caldwells?

Four towns that look like one market. They are two.

Caldwell, West Caldwell, North Caldwell and Essex Fells sit in a row along the same road. Buyers treat them as one search. The numbers say they are two very different places, and the line between them is not the one anybody points at.

CALDWELL
BOROUGH

\$800,000

\$418 a foot · n=37

WEST
CALDWELL

\$805,000

\$433 a foot · n=74

NORTH
CALDWELL

\$1,300,000

\$448 a foot · n=55

ESSEX
FELLS

\$1,500,000

\$483 a foot · n=18

How to use this later

You are probably not buying this week. Most people who download this are three months to a year out, and that is exactly the right time to be reading it.

Do not try to absorb the whole thing now. Here is what each part is for, and when to come back to it.

<u>You have sixty seconds and want the whole picture</u>	Page 3
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<u>You are searching all four towns at once and want to know what you are comparing</u>	Page 4
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<u>You are setting a budget and want to know which game you are in</u>	Page 5
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<u>One town looks expensive on tax and you want to know if it really is</u>	Pages 6 & 7
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<u>You are working out how you would actually get to work</u>	Page 10
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<u>A house has been sitting, or you can see it was listed before</u>	Pages 13 & 14
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<u>You are getting ready to write an offer</u>	Pages 15 & 17
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Most people reading this have never bought a house before. Nothing in here assumes you have.

Save the guide, and save the number. The question this cluster asks more than any other is which half of it your budget actually puts you in, and that has an answer we can work out in about a minute.

TEXT OR CALL

917.992.3098

caldwells.nancychuhomes.com

If you read nothing else, read this.

	CALDWELL BORO	WEST CALDWELL	NORTH CALDWELL	ESSEX FELLS
Homes sold	37	74	55	18
Median sold	\$800,000	\$805,000	\$1,300,000	\$1,500,000
Price per square foot	\$418	\$433	\$448	\$483
Typical size	1,853 sq ft	1,960 sq ft	2,760 sq ft	3,388 sq ft
Sale to original list	108.1%	107.9%	103.0%	97.9%
Median days on market	15	16	17	32
Median tax bill	\$14,490	\$11,760	\$17,587	\$20,304

GSMLS, single-family, non-distressed, closings 26 Sep 2025 to 16 Sep 2026. Caldwell Borough n=37, West Caldwell n=74, North Caldwell n=55, Essex Fells n=18. Essex Fells is a small sample and every Essex Fells number in this guide carries that.

LOOK AT THE PRICE PER FOOT ROW AGAIN

The most expensive town in the cluster costs 15% more per foot than the cheapest. The median house costs 88% more.

WHICH MEANS

You are not buying a better town as you move up this row. You are buying more house.

Median size runs from 1,853 square feet to 3,388. Median lot runs from 0.20 acres to 0.82. Everything else in this guide follows from that.

Four towns. Two districts. And the numbers break in the same place.

CALDWELL-WEST CALDWELL DISTRICT

Caldwell Borough West Caldwell

WEST ESSEX REGIONAL DISTRICT

North Caldwell Essex Fells

Municipal district boundaries. This guide does not rate, rank or compare the districts, and nothing here should be read as a statement about either one.

MEASURE	CALDWELL + WEST CALDWELL	NORTH CALDWELL + ESSEX FELS
Price per square foot	\$418 and \$433	\$448 and \$483
Sale to original list	108.1% and 107.9%	103.0% and 97.9%
Tax per \$1,000 of price paid	\$18.35 and \$14.68	\$14.17 and \$12.73
Median days to sell	15 and 16	17 and 32
Price cut, when a failed seller cut	2.3% and 3.4%	6.6% and 10.2%
One seat bus to Port Authority	Yes	No, or at the edge

Six measures, taken six different ways from three separate sources, and the same two towns land on the same side of the line every time.

WHAT WE ARE SAYING

The split is real, it is consistent, and almost nobody searching the Caldwells on a Saturday morning knows it is there.

Two thirds of everything sold above the asking price.

WHAT YOU SPEND	HOMES	TO ORIGINAL LIST	MEDIAN DAYS
Under \$700,000	32	105.7%	18
\$700,000 to \$1M	77	108.1%	15
\$1M to \$1.5M	39	106.6%	18
\$1.5M and above	19	100.1%	17

GSMLS, Caldwell Borough, West Caldwell and North Caldwell, closings 26 Sep 2025 to 16 Sep 2026, n=167.

68%

of everything that sold went for more than the seller originally asked. By town, 74% in West Caldwell, 69% in Caldwell Borough, 58% in North Caldwell.

14%

of sellers cut the price before selling, and the ones who did cut a median of 6.9%. Most sellers here do not need to.

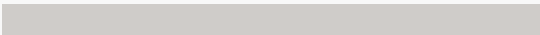
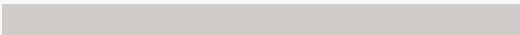
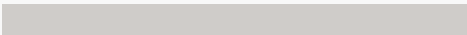
17 days

is how long it takes at the top of the market, where the price paid is the price asked and not a dollar more.

Above \$1.5M the market pays asking and not a dollar more.

One hundred point one percent, and it still takes seventeen days to get there. That is the only band in the cluster where the buyer is not bidding against somebody.

What the tax bill actually costs per dollar you spend.

Caldwell Borough		\$18.35
West Caldwell		\$14.68
North Caldwell		\$14.17
Essex Fells		\$12.73

Tax per \$1,000 of price paid. Median of the per-house ratio of annual tax to sale price, GSMLS closings 26 Sep 2025 to 16 Sep 2026, n=184.

The cheapest houses in the cluster are taxed the hardest on every dollar.

\$2,900

MORE EVERY YEAR

Two houses at \$800,000, one in Caldwell Borough and one in West Caldwell. They sell in the same number of days for the same money. The Caldwell Borough one costs roughly \$2,900 more every year to own, and it costs that every year for as long as you own it.

Over ten years that is \$29,000, on a house that cost the same.

Nobody shows you this row. Every listing shows you the annual tax figure, and that figure makes the expensive towns look expensive. Per dollar spent, it is the other way round. [Page 7](#) is why.

You pay today's price and are taxed on yesterday's number.

ONE. THE RATE

Every town sets its own.

TWO. THE ASSESSMENT

Your bill is calculated on what the town says your house is worth, not what you paid. Those two numbers drift apart the longer it has been since the town last revalued.

TOWN	MEDIAN 2026 ASSESSMENT	AS % OF WHAT HOUSES SOLD FOR
Caldwell Borough	\$444,900	57.2%
West Caldwell	\$432,700	54.3%
North Caldwell	\$763,300	61.5%
Essex Fells	\$878,600	60.8%

Essex County MOD-IV assessment records, 2026, matched to the homes that sold in the twelve months above.

NONE OF THE FOUR HAS REVALUED RECENTLY

Caldwell Boro	West Caldwell	North Caldwell	Essex Fells
\$426,300 to \$429,400	\$439,400 to \$442,400	\$716,100 to \$724,700	\$816,900 to \$830,500
+0.7%	+0.7%	+1.2%	+1.7%

Median assessment across all properties, 2023 against 2026. Less than 2% in four years while the market did not stand still.

This is also why the advertised tax rate is close to useless for comparing towns. A town that revalued last year looks cheap and is not. A town that has not revalued in a decade looks expensive and may not be.

Ask two questions on every house you get serious about. What is the actual assessment on this address, and when did this town last revalue.

Coming later: we have a separate guide on North Jersey property tax and revaluation. It is not written yet. If you want it when it lands, say so when you reach out.

A president, a university and every bus stop.

207 Bloomfield Avenue

The birthplace of the only US president born in New Jersey

120 Bloomfield Avenue

Caldwell University, founded 1939

Along the same road

Every stop on the one seat bus to Port Authority



GROVER CLEVELAND BIRTHPLACE
207 BLOOMFIELD AVENUE, CALDWELL

Grover Cleveland was born in Caldwell on 18 March 1837, in a house built five years earlier as the manse of the First Presbyterian Church. His father was the pastor. The family left when he was four.

The house was bought by a memorial association in 1913, restored with WPA help in 1934, and is run today by the State of New Jersey as a historic site. He is the only New Jersey native ever elected president.

Caldwell University has been on the same avenue since 1939, founded by the Sisters of Saint Dominic as a women's college and a university since 2014.

The road is the spine of the cluster. It is where the history sits, where the shops sit, and where the bus runs.

Which is also why [page 10](#) looks the way it does. The one town that is not on it commutes differently from the other three.



BLOOMFIELD AVENUE, CALDWELL

The one thing three of them share crosses the line every number draws.

Essex County has the first county park system in the United States. More than 6,000 acres and 33 parks designed by the Olmsted Brothers, the firm that laid out Central Park, on a relationship with the county that ran from the 1890s into the 1960s.

One of those 33 is here. Grover Cleveland Park, 41.5 acres, designed by the Olmsted Brothers in 1912. Rolling hills, winding paths, woodlands, ponds and streams, plus ballfields, tennis, pickleball, bocce and horseshoe pits. A conservancy has worked alongside the county on it since 2001.



ESSEX COUNTY PARK SYSTEM
FOUNDED 1895

The park sits in three of these four towns. Essex Fells, Caldwell and West Caldwell.

Look back at [page 4](#) and you will notice something. Every number in this guide splits these towns into Caldwell and West Caldwell on one side, North Caldwell and Essex Fells on the other.

Essex Fells shares its park with the two towns its numbers look nothing like.

NORTH CALDWELL IS THE TOWN NOT IN IT

Its park is Hilltop Reservation, 284 acres on the Second Watchung Mountain, shared with Cedar Grove and Verona, which are not in this cluster at all.

Hilltop was once the grounds of the Essex County Hospital Center and now carries a stretch of the Lenape Trail, 36 miles linking 18 parks across the county.

So North Caldwell faces a different direction. Different park, different neighbours, and as [page 10](#) shows, a different way of getting to work.

NJ.gov, NJ DCA historic sites, National Park Service, Olmsted Network, Essex County Parks and Caldwell University, all checked 21 September 2026.

The cheapest way to Manhattan starts on your own street.

There is no train station in any of the four towns. There is a bus that runs down Bloomfield Avenue to Port Authority, and there are three stations worth driving to.

ROUTE	MONTHLY	TIME TO MANHATTAN
NJ Transit 105 bus, from Bloomfield Ave	\$286	55 to 66 min from West Caldwell 48 to 58 from Caldwell
Drive to Montclair State, then the train	\$336	53 to 57 min after you park
Drive to Mountain View in Wayne, then the train	\$352	Parking is free, 236 spaces
Drive to Willowbrook, then the bus	\$352	49 min, and it runs weekends
Drive to Wayne Route 23, then the train	\$418	1,017 spaces

NJ Transit timetable T0105 issued 1 July 2026, Northern Interstate fare chart, NJ Transit station pages and trip planner, checked 21 September 2026. Monthly figures include station parking where it applies.

IF YOU ARE NOT IN FIVE DAYS A WEEK

NJ Transit sells a FlexPass, twenty one-way tickets good for thirty days, at \$164.90 for this zone.

Two days a week	\$164.90
Three days a week	\$223
Four or more	\$286

TWO LIMITS, AND THEY ARE REAL

The 105 runs weekdays only, with six morning trips and four evening returns. The last bus out of Port Authority is 7:30pm. Miss it and you are finding another way home.

DRIVE TIMES, ROUNDED UP

FROM	WILLOWBROOK	MONTCLAIR STATE
North Caldwell	10 min	15 min
Essex Fells	15 min	15 min
Caldwell	15 min	20 min
West Caldwell	15 min	20 min

AND IT DOES NOT SERVE NORTH CALDWELL

The route runs Kirkpatrick Lane to Roseland Avenue and down Bloomfield Avenue, south of the town. North Caldwell is the one town where every trip to Manhattan starts with a car. It is also the closest to both park and rides, which is the compensation.

Small houses cost the most per foot.

Split every house that sold into four groups by square footage, and the pattern everybody expects turns upside down.

QUARTER	SIZE RANGE	HOMES	MEDIAN SOLD	PER SQ FT	TO ORIG. LIST
Smallest	1,008 to 1,625	41	\$675,000	\$480	104.7%
Second	1,628 to 2,191	41	\$825,000	\$445	109.7%
Third	2,202 to 2,746	41	\$999,000	\$395	107.1%
Largest	2,760 and up	43	\$1,400,000	\$404	101.9%

GSMLS closings matched to Essex County assessor square footage, n=166.

AT THE ENTRY END YOU PAY A PREMIUM

Four hundred and eighty dollars a foot in the bottom quarter against \$395 in the third. If you are buying at the entry end of this market you are paying more per square foot, not getting a discount.

THE COMPETITION IS NOT AT THE TOP

The largest quarter went at 101.9% while the second quarter went at 109.7%.



WEST CALDWELL, NEW JERSEY

And lot size does the same thing inside every town. Splitting each town at its own median lot, the bigger half sells higher in all four. It is not a North Caldwell effect, it is a land effect, and it holds everywhere in the cluster.

Older houses here are not cheaper. They are smaller.

BUILT BEFORE 1950 · 62 HOMES

\$434 a foot

Median sold	\$755,000
Typical size	1,775 sq ft
To original list	108.5%
Median tax	\$12,084

BUILT 1950 OR LATER · 104 HOMES

\$438 a foot

Median sold	\$982,462
Typical size	2,536 sq ft
To original list	103.9%
Median tax	\$15,246

Four dollars a foot apart. That is a different sentence from the one most buyers expect, and it changes what you should be comparing when you walk two houses on the same afternoon.

The older half also bids harder, 108.5% against 103.9%, and carries about \$3,200 a year less in tax because it is a smaller house.

BY SHAPE OF HOUSE	HOMES	MEDIAN SOLD	TO ORIG. LIST
Colonial	73	\$930,000	109.5%
Cape Cod	22	\$682,500	108.4%
Split Level	17	\$901,000	104.7%
Ranch	12	\$988,500	111.8%
Custom	14	\$1,665,000	100.3%

GSMLS closings matched to Essex County assessor year built, n=166. Categories with six homes or fewer are not reported.

Ranches bid hardest in the whole cluster at 111.8%. There are only twelve of them, so treat it as a signal rather than a rule, but if you want one you should expect company.

Three quarters of them never cut the price once.

Over four and a half years, 179 listings across these four towns came off the market without selling. They sit on 132 distinct houses.

TOWN	LISTINGS	HOUSES	NEVER CUT	CUT, WHEN THEY CUT	DAYS BEFORE GIVING UP
Caldwell Borough	27	18	67%	2.3%	43
West Caldwell	53	45	87%	3.4%	22
North Caldwell	72	48	72%	6.6%	48
Essex Fells	27	22	70%	10.2%	54
All four	179	132	75%	5.4%	40

GSMLS withdrawn, expired and temporarily off market, listings dated Jan 2022 to Aug 2026, n=179 listings on 132 distinct houses. A longer window than the sold figures in this guide, deliberately, because four years of failures is a better dataset than one.

A listing failing here is almost never a pricing correction. It is a seller finding out what the market thinks and leaving rather than answering.

2.3% · 3.4%
6.6% · 10.2%

THE CUT COLUMN, READ DOWN

The higher up this ladder a house sits, the deeper the cut when a seller finally makes one. That is the third thing in this guide that moves in step with price, and [page 14](#) turns it into an instruction.

They did not sell because the market improved. They sold because the number came down.

Of those 132 houses, 33 relisted and sold inside the window. Fifty-five percent of them sold for less than the ask they originally walked away from.

TOWN	HOUSES	MEDIAN FIRST ASK	MEDIAN EVENTUAL SALE	GAP
Caldwell Borough	7	\$959,000	\$975,000	+1.7%
West Caldwell	9	\$799,000	\$825,000	+3.3%
North Caldwell	15	\$1,799,000	\$1,632,000	-9.3%

GSMLS, same towns and property type. Essex Fells n=2 and is not reported separately. Gap is the median eventual sale against the median first ask. On the attempt that worked, these sellers got 100.0% of that listing's asking price.

IN NORTH CALDWELL AND ESSEX FELS

A house that has been listed before and withdrawn is a live negotiation.

Especially above \$1.5M. About half eventually trade below the number the seller walked away from, and when those sellers cut, they cut 7 to 10%.

IN WEST CALDWELL, IT IS NOT

Those sellers get their original number whether they sell on the first try or the third.

A low offer on a relisted West Caldwell house is reading a signal that is not there.

So the first question on any house you like is how long it has really been available, and whether this is the first time it has been listed.

That is not on the listing sheet. Ask. Two towns four minutes apart take two completely different answers.

Know which half of the cluster you are shopping.

01 Under \$1M you are bidding. Over \$1.5M you are negotiating.

108% of ask in about two weeks at the bottom, 100% in about the same two weeks at the top. Those need different offers, and most buyers write the same one in both.

02 Do not read a high tax figure as an expensive town

Divide the annual bill by the price before you decide anything. [Page 6.](#)

03 Ask the listing history before you ask anything else

How long it has really been available, and whether this is the first time it has been listed. [Page 14.](#)

04 Get the actual assessment and the revaluation date

Both are public and both change what the house costs you every year you own it. [Page 7.](#)

05 Set your appraisal gap number before you need it

Not in the car on the way to sign.

06 In the entry bands, patience is not a strategy, it is a cost

Those homes sell in fifteen days at eight percent over. If you need three days to think, you are not buying in that band.

List price is marketing. Always, only, ever, full stop.

What we do that you do not have to.



THE TEAM

You work with Nancy Chu and her buyer specialists, plus Nancy's transaction team once you are under contract.

Working out which half of this cluster your budget puts you in

The answer decides the whole strategy, and it is not the answer most searches give you.

Pulling the listing history on any house you like

Including the times it was listed before, which is not on the sheet.

Getting the real assessment and the revaluation date

Both public, both worth money, neither in the listing.

Introducing you to a lender early

Before you tour, not after you find the house.

Booking every inspection

General, tank sweep, radon and the insect report.

Reading the offer instructions with you

The agent-only section of the MLS that buyers never see.

Setting the appraisal gap number together

A number you chose, not one off a template.

We do what it takes.

Before you tour. Before you write.

BEFORE YOU TOUR

- ☐ Your true ceiling, not your comfortable number
 - ☐ Which band that ceiling puts you in, from [page 5](#)
 - ☐ Lender conversation finished, not started
 - ☐ For any address you are serious about: the actual tax bill and the assessment
 - ☐ For any house you like: how long has it really been available, and has it been listed before
 - ☐ If you commute: whether the 105 runs where you are looking
-

BEFORE YOU WRITE

- ☐ The offer instructions, read with your agent
 - ☐ Your appraisal gap cap, a number you chose
 - ☐ Your inspection structure, with the tank sweep in it
 - ☐ Annual tax divided by the price you are offering, compared against [page 6](#)
 - ☐ What you would do if the appraisal comes in low
 - ☐ Whether anything you are conceding is something you actually need
-

The four crimson boxes are the Caldwells-specific ones. Which half of the cluster you are in, what the tax really costs per dollar, and how long the house has actually been available are the three things that decide the offer here.

What our own numbers say.

About 70%

of the offers we write get accepted.

Nancy Chu Homes' own figures, the 12 months to September 2026.

Nine in ten

of the deals that go under contract with us close.

NCH tracker, November 2024 to September 2026.

4.99 stars

across 319 reviews.

Experience.com aggregate, checked 12 September 2026.

1,300+

transactions and \$560M+ since 2005.

EVERY LISTING STAYS ON THE BOARD

Every sale listing we have signed since November 2024 has either closed or is still on our board.

WHEN A DEAL FALLS APART

Half of the buyers whose contract fell apart bought their house with us anyway. Four of eight households, NCH tracker, November 2024 to September 2026.

WHY THERE IS NO PER-TOWN TRANSACTION COUNT HERE

We have seen figures quoted for these towns. We cannot yet trace them to GSMLS production data, so they are not in this guide. Every number in here carries its source and its date, and the ones that do not survive that test are left out rather than rounded up.

Based on Nancy Chu Homes' own transaction records for the periods stated. Outcomes vary by property, financing, inspection, appraisal, title and other factors. Not a guarantee of future results.

Send us the address.

If a house comes up in any of the four and you want to know what it really costs to own and whether the asking price is soft, send us the address.

The listing history

How long it has really been available, and whether it has been listed before.

The assessment and the revaluation date

What the tax bill will actually be on that address, per dollar you spend.

What the comps actually say

Not what the listing says. What the closed sales nearby say.

TEXT OR CALL NANCY CHU

917.992.3098

Or email nancy@nancychuhomes.com. No obligation, and it takes about five minutes.



CALDWELL, NEW JERSEY

AND WHEN YOU WANT THE WHOLE PLAN

The Buyer SUCCESS Strategy Session is a conversation, not a pitch. A needs analysis, a plan built around your budget and your commute, and a straight answer on which half of this cluster your number actually reaches. You do not need to be ready to buy this month.

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NANCY CHU HOMES

@ KELLER WILLIAMS NJ METRO GROUP

Four towns that look like one market. They are two.

Built from 184 closed sales across Caldwell, West Caldwell, North Caldwell and Essex Fells over a full year, not from a listings site.

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Town Minutes, week by week.

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Every figure in this guide carries its source in the body copy. Market figures are levels for one twelve-month window, not growth rates. Withdrawn and expired figures cover Jan 2022 to Aug 2026 and are labelled where they appear. School district references are municipal boundary facts only and are not a rating, ranking or recommendation of any district. Performance figures carry their scope and window and are not a guarantee of future results. Confirm tax, assessment, transit and municipal details with the township, NJ Transit and your attorney before you rely on them in a transaction.