



MAYOR'S TOWN HALL QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

April 23, 2026

1. What is the City doing about water shortages and drought concerns?

The City can meaningfully reduce the impacts of drought by managing demand, protecting water supplies, and coordinating regionally. Efforts include identifying and repairing water losses in pipes and valves, monitoring for abnormal water usage and notifying customers when issues are detected, and encouraging conservation through programs such as leak repairs, efficient appliances, and water-saving fixtures. The City also provides clear guidance on water conservation measures and enforces watering regulations when necessary.

2. Why are subdivisions being approved during drought conditions? Are state drought warnings being ignored?

A city council generally cannot deny a subdivision application solely because of drought conditions. Any denial must be based on adopted laws, development standards, or a demonstrated lack of adequate public services. The City may impose conditions of approval, such as requiring proof of water rights, water storage capacity, or infrastructure improvements.

3. Could golf carts be used to transport visitors, including seniors, individuals with disabilities, and families with young children, to downtown businesses?

The City would need to evaluate the cost and potential usage of such a program. A golf cart-style vehicle typically costs between \$12,000 and \$25,000, with startup costs for a small fleet ranging from approximately \$75,000 to \$150,000. Annual operating expenses, including drivers, insurance, and administration, could range from \$150,000 to \$350,000.

The City currently partners with Destination Caldwell during special events by providing golf carts and drivers. Additionally, the City purchased two golf carts in 2024 as part of the Downtown Ambassador Program. Expansion of the program may be considered during future budget discussions, including the FY2027 budget process.



4. Could local artists volunteer to repaint Rainbow Hill near Rose Hill?

All proposed public art projects, including murals, are reviewed by the Public Art Management Team, which includes representatives from Caldwell Fine Arts, Destination Caldwell, the Planning and Zoning Department, and the Economic Development Team.

Artists and property owners must complete the City's Public Art/Mural Application process. Proposals are evaluated based on artistic quality, site appropriateness, and their contribution to the surrounding area. Because these murals are installed on privately owned property, City Council approval is not required.

The City has also established easement agreements with participating property owners to address maintenance, access, and long-term visibility. When opportunities arise for community participation in public art projects, the City will announce them through official press releases and social media channels.

5. Are golf course fees going to increase?

The City's goal is to keep golf course fees affordable and accessible, particularly for families and individuals who are new to the game. Fee adjustments are reviewed annually as part of the budget process. At this time, no decision has been made regarding a fee increase. Residents interested in learning more about proposed fees are encouraged to attend the City's fee workshop in July.

6. Are there plans to repair residential streets, including those in Sienna Hills?

All residential streets that were chip-sealed in 2024 are scheduled to receive a fog coat treatment between mid-July and September 2026, including streets within the Sienna Hills area.

7. What is Flock Safety?

Flock Safety is a technology provider used by the City of Caldwell that supplies automated license plate readers, fixed cameras, and gunshot detection technology. Data collected through these systems is owned by the City and retained for 30 days. The use of this technology is governed by Idaho law and City policy and may assist with criminal investigations.

8. Cost of Flock & Drones?

The City's annual cost for Flock Safety services is approximately \$169,000. The drone program is funded through a five-year contract totaling \$1,872,809, with payments made annually over the life of the agreement.



9. What is the timeline for cemetery vase orders?

The City manages the cemetery; however, memorial vases are ordered directly through monument companies. Typical fulfillment times for these orders are approximately six to eight weeks.

10. Why does the City have debt, and will additional taxes be required?

The City currently has two sources of debt. The first is a 20-year voter-approved General Obligation Bond funded through property taxes. These funds are being used to rebuild Fire Station No. 1, construct Fire Station No. 4, and provide administrative office improvements.

The second is a 10-year lease agreement for three fire apparatus vehicles. This obligation is funded through impact fees and capital funds rather than property taxes.

11. What is happening at Farmway and Ustick, and when will the project be completed?

The project is managed by the Highway District, which is a separate governmental entity from the City of Caldwell. Improvements include construction of a multi-lane roundabout, relocation of the Phyllis Canal, drainage improvements, utility relocations, and replacement of the canal bridge on Middleton Road.

The project is currently scheduled for completion in May 2026, weather permitting. Roundabouts are designed to safely accommodate commercial vehicles, including semi-trucks.

12. When will the project on Arthur Street between 16th Avenue and 18th Avenue be completed?

Barring unforeseen delays, sewer construction is expected to be completed in early June. Following completion of the sewer work, crews will move to Albany Street to complete surface improvements, including curb, gutter, sidewalk, driveway repairs, grading, and paving. This phase is expected to take approximately 60 days.

13. Can additional "No Jake Brake" signs be installed near Ustick Road and Homedale Road?

Requests for additional traffic signage are reviewed through the City's Traffic Commission process.



14. What is the impact on Caldwell businesses regarding moratoriums? How does it affect city budget?

A development moratorium could reduce City revenue by limiting the collection of development-related fees, including impact fees. These revenues help fund services and staffing in departments such as fire prevention, planning and zoning, building, and engineering.

Impact fees also support growth-related infrastructure projects, including parks, police, and fire facilities. Additionally, reduced development may slow growth in taxable property values, which could affect future levy rates and City revenues.

15. What is the City doing to improve communication and engagement with local businesses?

Mayor Eric Phillips is conducting Business Roundtables to strengthen communication and collaboration between the City of Caldwell and the local business community. These invitation-only meetings provide an opportunity for business leaders and City staff to discuss priorities, identify challenges, and explore solutions together.

Business Roundtable Schedule

- **Frequency:** Monthly
- **Industry Participation:** Each industry sector is scheduled to meet twice during the program cycle.
- **When:** One Wednesday a month (dates TBA)
- **Time:** 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
- **Format:** Meetings may include a one-hour group session with a presentation and open discussion, or individual interview sessions scheduled throughout a four-hour period.
- **Attendance:** By invitation only



16. There are concerns about dust at Main Street and 15th Avenue. What is being done to address it?

The City will work with the contractor to ensure appropriate dust-control measures are being implemented and maintained throughout the project.

17. Why do utility bills fluctuate from month to month?

Utility bills vary based on water consumption. Higher water usage generally results in higher utility bills, while lower usage can reduce monthly costs.

In addition, sewer charges are reviewed annually using customers' lowest average water usage period, typically during the winter months. Sewer rates are then adjusted based on that usage calculation.

The City of Caldwell implemented water, sewer, and sanitation rate adjustments that took effect with November 2025 utility bills. These changes were necessary to:

- Maintain and improve aging water and sewer infrastructure.
- Ensure the long-term reliability and sustainability of utility services.
- Address rising operational costs, including labor, equipment, materials, energy, technology upgrades, and regulatory compliance requirements.

Utility services are funded through user fees and connection fees rather than property taxes. As a result, operational and maintenance costs must be supported through utility rates.

Residents may also experience changes in other utility costs, such as electricity rates, which are determined by their utility provider and are separate from City utility charges.

18. Is the Mayor's Facebook page a public page?

Yes. The Mayor's Facebook page is publicly accessible. Because City Business may be discussed on the page, record related to official City business may be subject to applicable Idaho public record laws.

19. Can the motel sign near the Chamber of Commerce be changed to say "Caldwell"?

The sign and the property on which it is located are privately owned. Any modifications to the sign would be at the discretion of the property owner.



20. How will the Quiet Zone affect safety for pedestrians and motorists?

The City of Caldwell has spent the past two years working through the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) approval process to establish a railroad Quiet Zone. The purpose of a Quiet Zone is to reduce routine train horn use while maintaining or improving safety at railroad crossings.

To achieve this, the City is installing additional safety measures at crossings, including:

- Raised median barriers to prevent drivers from going around crossing gates.
- Enhanced warning signs and pavement markings.
- Detectable warning surfaces for pedestrians.
- Improvements to crossing infrastructure and safety equipment.

The seven crossings included in the Quiet Zone are located at 5th Avenue, Kimball Avenue, 9th Avenue, 12th Avenue, 21st Avenue, Linden Street, and Ustick Road.

The FRA evaluates railroad crossing safety using established risk formulas. According to the FRA's analysis, the proposed Quiet Zone configuration in Caldwell has a lower calculated risk level than the current configuration that relies on routine train horn use.

The City has confirmed with its insurance provider that establishing the Quiet Zone will not automatically increase insurance premiums. Any future adjustments would depend on claims history and other factors.

More than 1,000 Quiet Zones currently operate throughout the United States. The City believes the additional safety improvements associated with the Quiet Zone will continue to provide safe crossings for motorists and pedestrians while reducing unnecessary train horn noise in nearby neighborhoods.

21. What are impact fees, and how are they used?

The City of Caldwell collects four types of impact fees:

- Parks
- Police
- Fire
- Transportation

Impact fees are one-time charges assessed on new residential and commercial development. By state law, these funds may only be used for growth-related capital improvements with an expected useful life of at least 10 years.



Impact fees can only be spent on projects identified in the City's Capital Improvements Plan (CIP), which is reviewed and updated at least every five years in accordance with Idaho law.

Current impact fee schedules are available on the City's website:

<https://www.cityofcaldwell.org/Departments/Community-Development/Building-Safety-Division/Applications-and-Forms>

22. Will the Caldwell Municipal Pool be open this summer, and are there any anticipated staffing issues?

Yes. The Caldwell Municipal Pool is expected to be open for the summer season, and the City does not anticipate any staffing shortages that would affect operations. Applications for pool staff can be found at: <https://www.cityofcaldwell.org/Departments/Human-Resources/Career-Opportunities/Pool-Lifeguard>