

# CITY NATIONAL BANK EXPANDS BAY AREA PRESENCE

BY MARK CALVEY

**C**ity National Bank is opening a branch in Sunnyvale on Feb. 15, marking its ninth location in the greater Bay Area.

The new branch, located at 301 W. McKinley Ave., Suite 100, and led by branch manager Amal Allan, is the third location serving Silicon Valley, with other offices in Palo Alto and San Jose. To serve the large South-Asian community in Sunnyvale, City National notes that the branch staff can speak Hindi, Tagalog, Arabic and Cambodian in addition to English.

“We’re very optimistic about the economy over the foreseeable future, particularly the Bay Area,” Michael Walker, executive vice president and head of commercial banking at City National, told me Wednesday.

Over the next 12 to 18 months, City National plans to do more small business lending in the Sacramento region, said Walker, who is based in the Bay Area as senior regional executive for Northern California. Los Angeles-based City National has been part of the Royal Bank of Canada (NYSE: RY) since 2015. A particular focus of the Sacramento lending will be the SBA’s 504 program, often used by small business owners seeking to buy the commercial real estate in which their businesses operate. Plans for expanded lending in the Sacramento area don’t include opening a branch, at least not yet.

“We see more and more business migration up the I-80 East corridor into Sacramento, so we want to, in a systematic manner, take advantage of that,” Walker said, adding that its 504-program borrowers often move their primary banking relationship to City National.

Since City National CEO Kelly Coffey took the reins in 2019, the bank’s assets have soared almost 80% to more than \$91 billion.

City National first entered the Bay Area in 2000, with its purchase of The Pacific Bank. The region has changed dramatically since City National first came to the Bay Area, with the burgeoning tech sector expanding well beyond Silicon Valley to include San Francisco and the East Bay. More Bay



CITY NATIONAL BANK

*Michael Walker, head of commercial banking and the senior regional executive for Northern California at City National Bank, said he wants to do more small-business lending in Sacramento over the next 12 to 18 months.*



*Kelly Coffey,  
CEO,  
City National  
Bank*

Area companies are expanding to China or other parts of the United States, especially with the rise of remote work, but one thing hasn’t changed, Walker said: “This is still the haven of knowledge workers.”

With more people operating remotely, City National this week unveiled what it calls its first virtual branch consisting of “virtual concierges” that clients can call to handle a variety of banking matters, including applying for a loan, opening new accounts

and connecting with a local wealth adviser.

“Throughout the pandemic, we’ve heard loud and clear that many of our clients do not feel comfortable walking into a branch to do their banking,” said Scott Witter, executive vice president of personal and business banking at City National. The virtual concierges are able to work with clients across many geographies and time zones.

City National’s expansion occurs as the Bay Area banking landscape is expected to change dramatically this year, with U.S. Bank buying MUFG Union Bank and BMO Financial Group, parent of the Bank of Montreal, purchasing San Francisco-based Bank of the West. Both deals are expected to close later this year.

“The fact that we’re seeing banking consolidation in the Bay Area just confirms our focus and attention around growth,” Walker said. “No matter what is said about California – the cost of doing business, etcetera – it’s viewed to be a very attractive growth marketplace. Other banks see that as well.”