

URBAN KNOW-HOW

THE POWERHOUSE DUO BEHIND URBAN COMMUNITY LOOKS TO CREATE A MORE CONNECTED USER EXPERIENCE FOR DOWNTOWN SAN JOSE.

The roots of San Jose-based Urban Community (urbancommunity.com) run deep. The founders, Gary Dillabough and Jeff Arrillaga, worked together at the real estate firm Cornish & Carey 30 years ago and remained friends. They went on to pursue different career paths—Gary an eBay executive and venture capitalist, and Jeff a top-producing commercial leasing agent—before deciding to launch an endeavor. The result? An investment and development company that has spent more than \$300 million acquiring a portfolio of properties in its hometown (almost as much as Google has doled out in the area) to ensure that the city is “the place to be” in Northern California. “Some things that brought us here are the weather, a world-class airport and arts, the university and sports teams, and the opportunity to create a vibrancy and a place that can be inspiring with college kids, successful company leaders and a great political environment,” explains Gary. “There’s an amazing infrastructure...now it’s our job to kind of bring that to life. I think with a thoughtful strategy and a long-term vision, we can make downtown San Jose something that rivals the greatest cities in the U.S.” Their goal, adds Jeff, is to create an urban user experience with a mix of office, retail and residential space. “When you go on trips to places like Paris, they are always so enjoyable, and that’s why we’ve invested so much company resources to lay down ideas and examples, and hopefully, other developers will join arms with us and do that as well.” Now in their third year of business, the pair has partnered with community members, designers, technologists, city officials and builders like Canadian-based developer



Westbank to re-envision downtown San Jose by acquiring a mix of world-class, eco-friendly buildings (about 27 so far) from St. James Park to the SoFA District. Among their current projects: the mixed-use venture Museum Place, along with Valley Title (where they’re planning commercial and residential buildings), and coming soon, a revamp of the historic Bank of Italy building. Aiming to further unite the district, the men also recently

launched the nonprofit San Jose SHIP (Shelter in Place) Kits to provide medical, nutritional and emotional support for Santa Clara County residents affected by the Coronavirus pandemic. “The goal we’re trying to accomplish is not so much about real estate,” says Gary. “Our thinking has taken us to trying to address something more fundamental... a better quality of life for people and a better community.”