

HAWORTH

Building a Connected, Engaged Community— Inside and Out

September 2019

Customer Story
American Water

Location
Camden, New Jersey

Project Type
New Public Utility HQ

Design Firms
Gensler

Dealer Partner
Bellia Office Furniture

Photographer
Halkin Mason



How can the right space in the right location draw in top talent, keep your best employees, and develop relationships?

Overview

Over the last 130+ years, American Water has become the largest investor-owned water and wastewater utility company in the United States, providing safe, clean, affordable, and reliable water services to an estimated 14 million customers. Experts in water quality, testing, compliance, and treatment, American Water develops and implements innovative solutions for communities throughout the United States. Committed to excellence in everything they do, American Water keeps their customers' lives flowing, engaging with community partners and investing in resources to empower their employees to make a difference in the communities where they live and work.

One Water Street is the new home of American Water's corporate headquarters. Its campus along the Delaware river in Camden, New Jersey was chosen with the intention of creating a landmark for the future, representing a renaissance of the neighborhood. A beautiful riverside park now invites local residents for relaxation, play, and special community events. And the light, bright, and modern building draws more than 700 employees and contractors to the area for work, contributing to the city's economy, as well as strengthening community and well-being—both inside and outside its five-story glass walls.

Specifications



- Stories: 5
- Area: 220,000 sq. ft.
- Occupants: 700+

Objective

Find a new location where American Water could engage with the community, attract new talent, and bring all of their HQ employees together under one roof.

Solution

Build a consolidated HQ with spaces and elements that support connection, collaboration, and community while offering an enticing workplace destination for current and future employees.

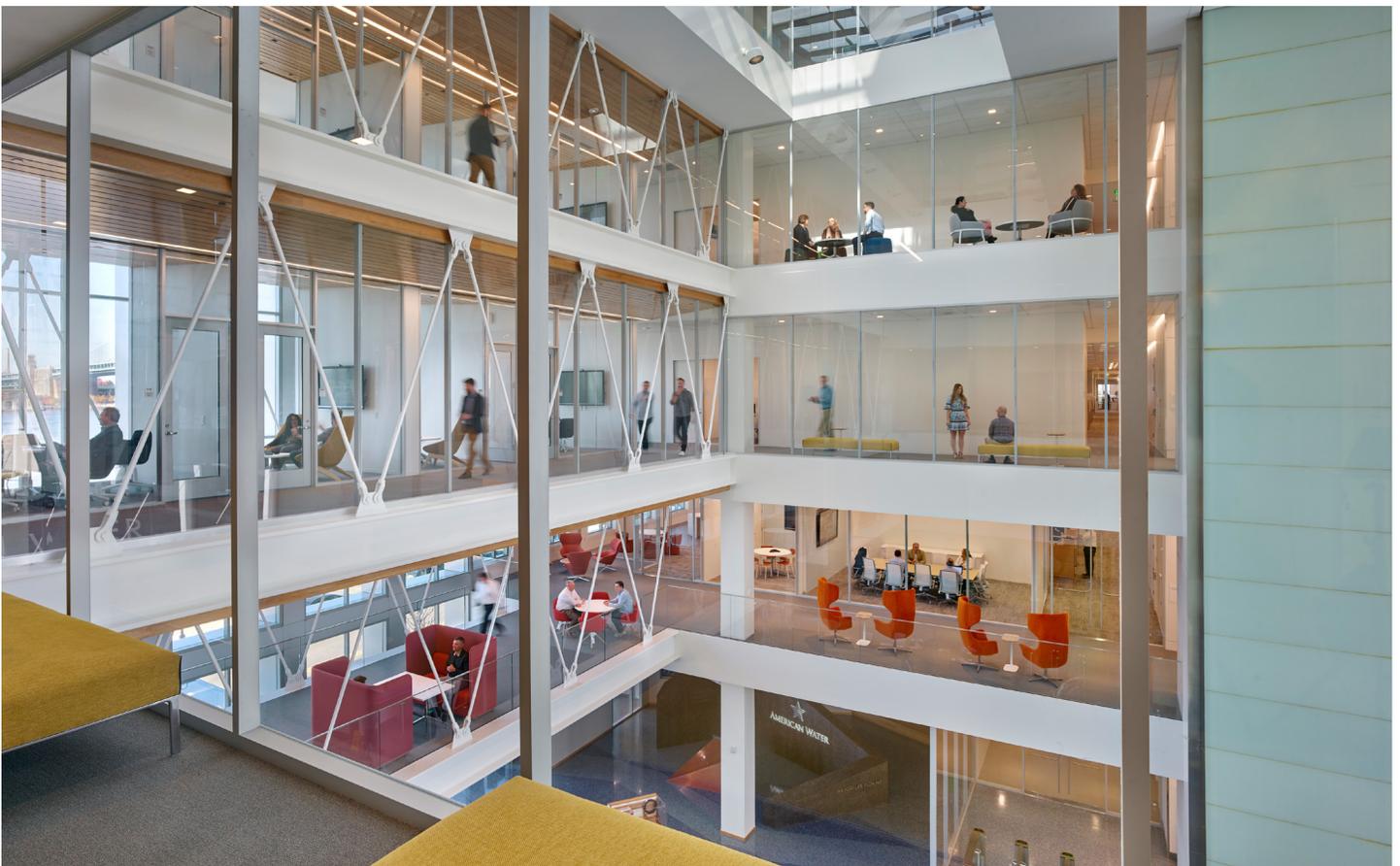
Results

A modern, water-themed campus in a convenient metropolitan location that attracts employees and visitors, supports well-being, and contributes to the revitalization of the Camden community.

A Place with Space for All

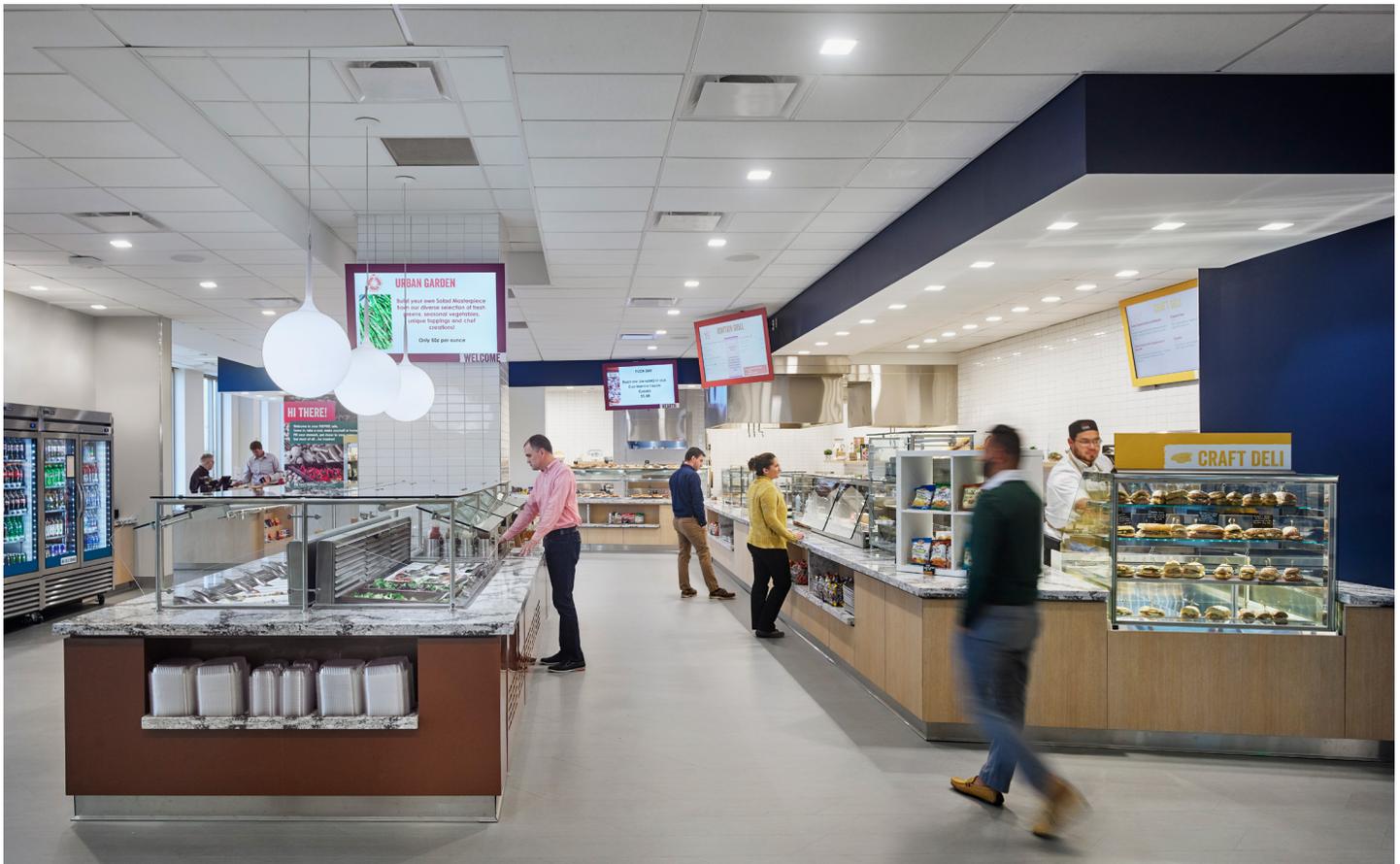
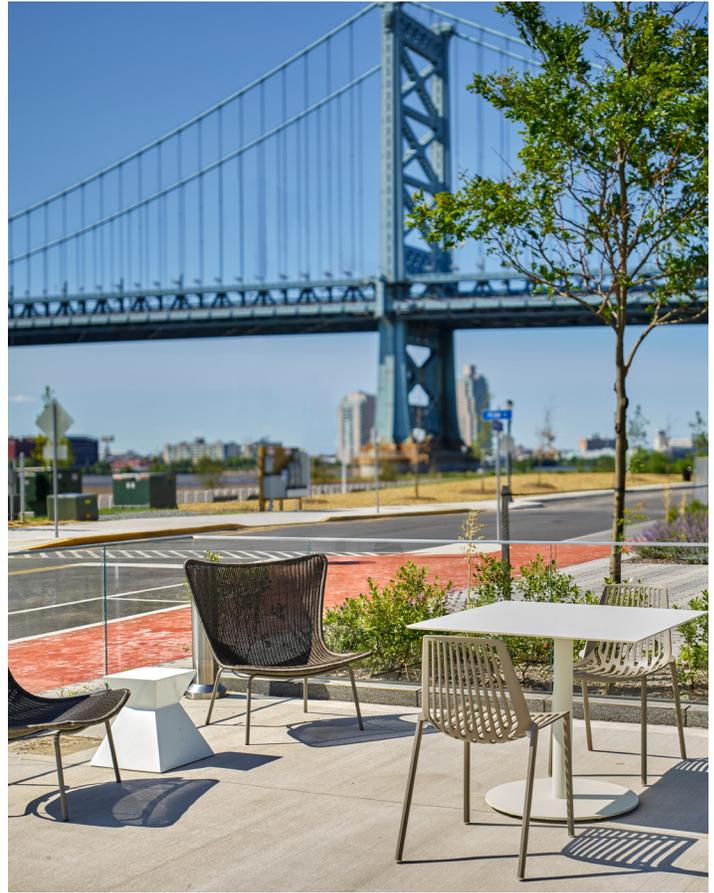
As a geographically diverse utility company, American Water has offices throughout the US. However, the company needed a consolidated central office they could call home. Previously spread across four locations, American Water's dispersed headquarters organization created gaps in communication and made collaboration feel like a chore. Bringing everyone together in one office would allow them to have easy access to one another, while creating a sense of community and providing a level of connection and engagement they'd not experienced before.

American Water's leaders placed great importance on building their new office within their water service footprint, so they could make a positive impact on a community where they do business. Their goal was to find a metropolitan location that would engage local residents, make current employees feel welcome, and attract a large talent pool with its ease of access from the surrounding areas. After looking at several options, they chose to build along the Delaware riverfront in Camden, New Jersey.



“The workforce is changing. Their needs are changing, and they want to have access to public transportation. They want to be in areas where they can work, play, and stay and we weren’t seeing that as much in the suburbs as we are here in Camden.”

Yimi Kierman
Senior Project Manager
American Water



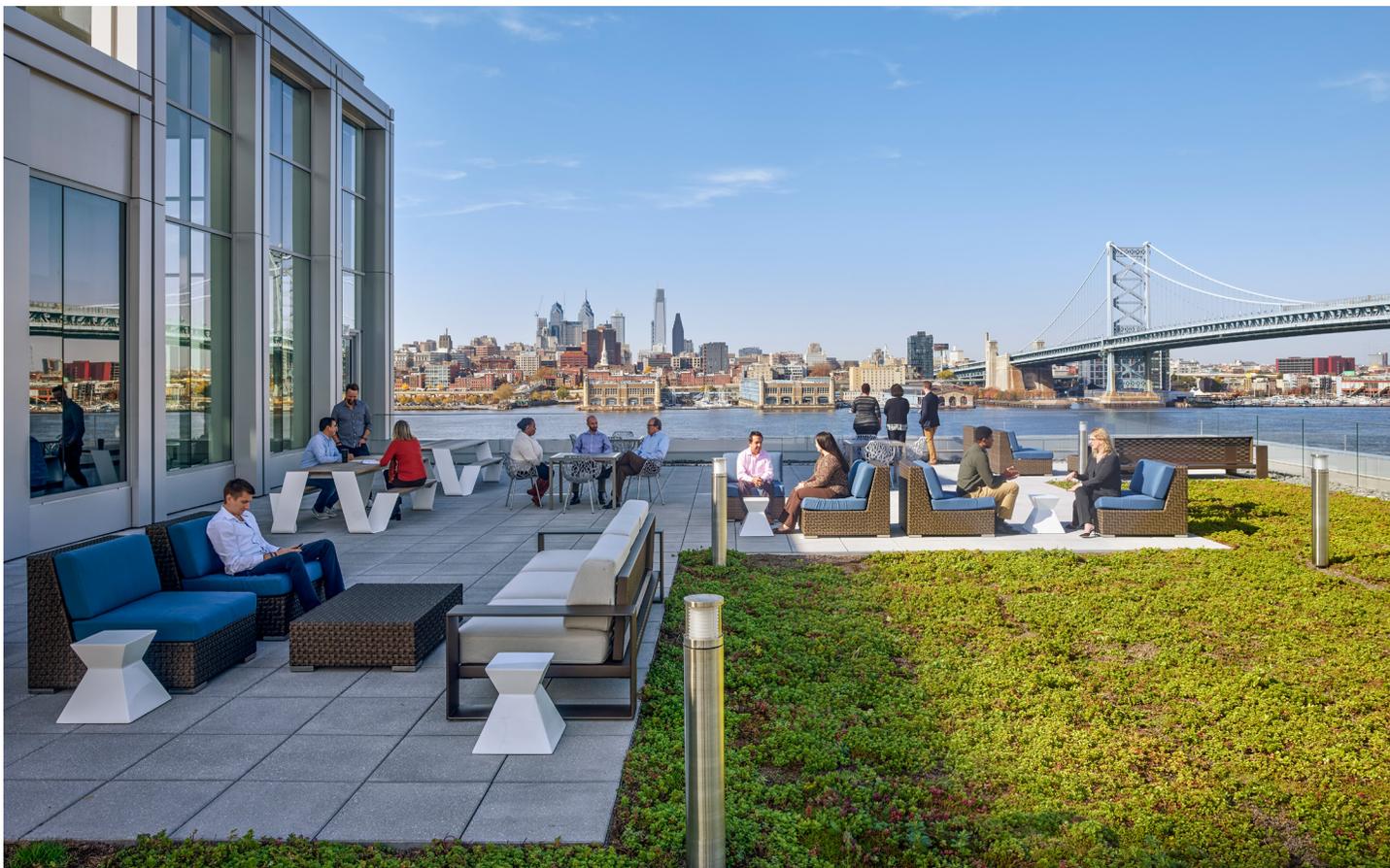
The Ideal Location

Camden affords a perfect opportunity for American Water to build on their partnership with the city and help revitalize the area, bringing a renewed sense of pride to the community. With that in mind, they created a large, relaxing public park at the river's edge. Everyone is welcome to walk, run, and bike through or just sit and watch the ducks paddle by, as they take in the views of Philadelphia. The park provides a beautiful, new venue for community events, picnics, and holiday gatherings, with a lush lawn that makes an excellent viewing spot for 4th of July fireworks.

Easily accessible via numerous transportation modes from Philadelphia and surrounding areas, Camden provides a convenient metropolitan location for a modern hub of collaboration and innovation that houses all American Water's current headquarters employees, attracts new members of the workforce to their growing business, and allows everyone to be a part of the community's renaissance.

Keeping People Connected—Even Outdoors

Two wi-fi enabled terraces give employees full access to enjoy the outdoors, while keeping them happily connected, through both data and in-person interaction.





“People come to work, walk up to the window, and take a picture. They send it to their loved ones and say, ‘Hey, this is my new view. Can you believe it?’”

Yimi Kierman
Senior Project Manager
American Water

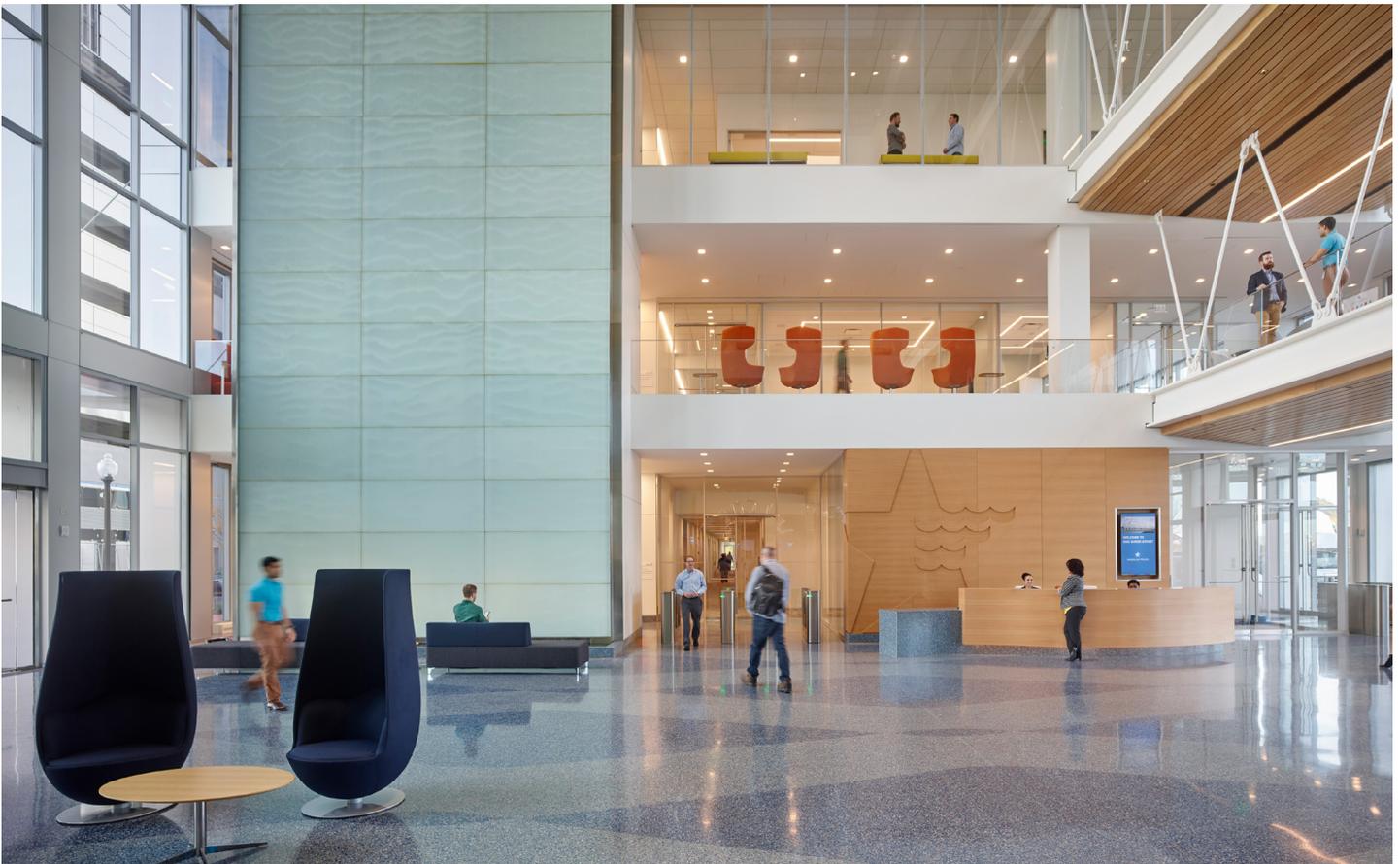


A Heritage of Water in Design

When it came to design, American Water wanted everyone who enters its headquarters to instantly understand that they've walked into a water company. Working with the developer and project team, they created and defined the building to reflect the company's brand and history as a water company—from the waterfront location and sweeping views of the Delaware River to two magnificent atrium waterfalls and a flowing staircase that spans the five-story glass windows along the river. As the interior designs were refined, furnishings were also chosen to reflect this heritage in water. Neutral tones were used to keep everything looking clean and pure, while pops of blues and greens bring life to the spaces with the colors of water and nature.

Atrium Falls Welcome All

The open atrium boasts an impressive, five-story waterfall on either side of the elevators, representing the company's relationship with water to all employees and visitors who enter the building. The falls also add a connection to nature, creating a soothing soundscape that permeates the building.



“We’ve brought in the water theme throughout the entire building. When employees are here, they know they work for a water company, and it’s really important to tie that to the front line—to the purpose of our business.”

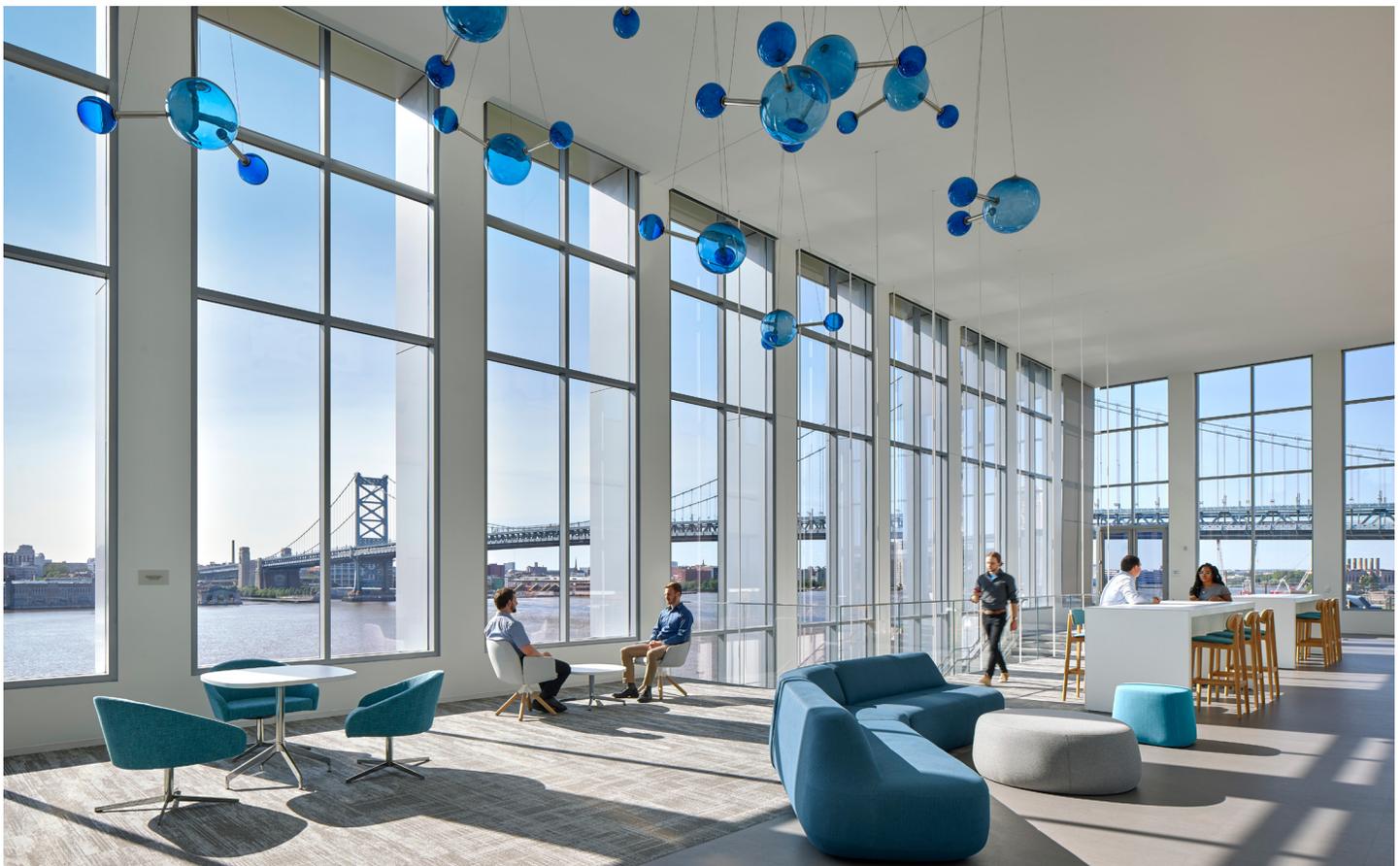
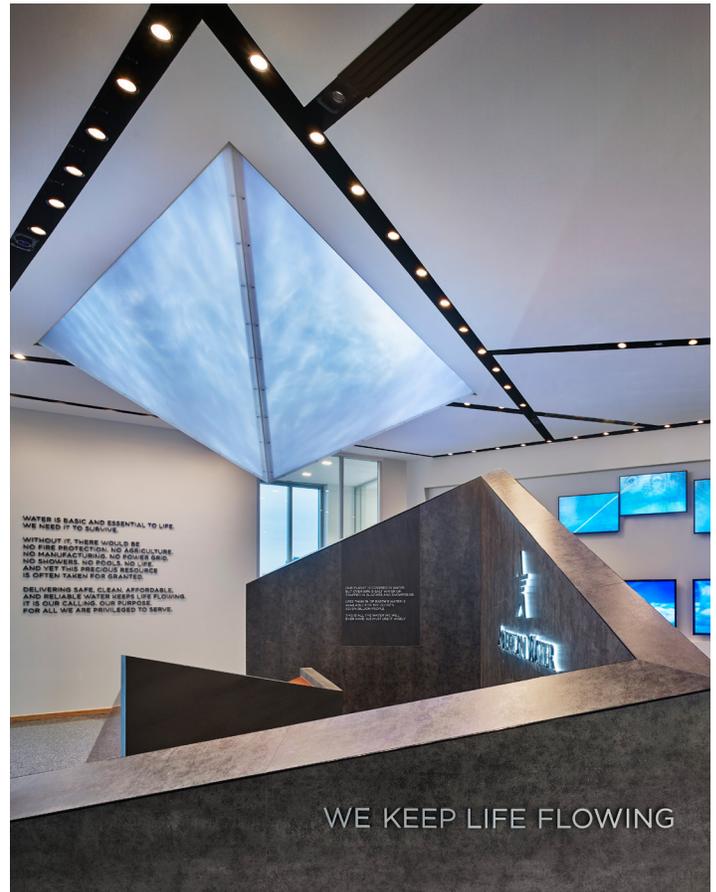
Linda Sullivan
CFO, Retired
American Water

Innovation Center

Visitors can take a tour of the 130+ years of American Water’s history in water innovation, and view the single-drop waterfall symbolizing how each small effort contributes to the larger outcome.

Lighting the Way to Inspiration

The “Lantern” gathering space provides a variety of settings to informally meet and collaborate. Situated atop a five-story open staircase, the area is embellished with suspended glass water molecule sculptures and offers an inspiring panorama of the Philadelphia skyline.



Free-Flowing Feedback

Soliciting feedback through employee surveys and maintaining interaction throughout the project, American Water created excitement for their new headquarters office and mitigated negative change responses. Prior to groundbreaking, employees toured the planned site and were treated to a picnic to address uncertainties they may have about moving to the area. Later during the process, employees were invited to see construction progress, evaluate and vote on two different workstation options, and provide input on interior design, as well.

American Water learned from employees that they desired amenities such as a cafeteria, fitness center, and height-adjustable desks. Understanding the benefits of a happy, healthy workforce, the company added a full-service cafeteria with healthy food options and places for people to gather, as well as a fitness center with the latest equipment, locker rooms with showers, and a bike storage room. Every workstation also includes a height-adjustable desk, giving everyone the ability to choose and change working postures throughout the day, as well as a healthy nudge to keep moving.

Creating Connections

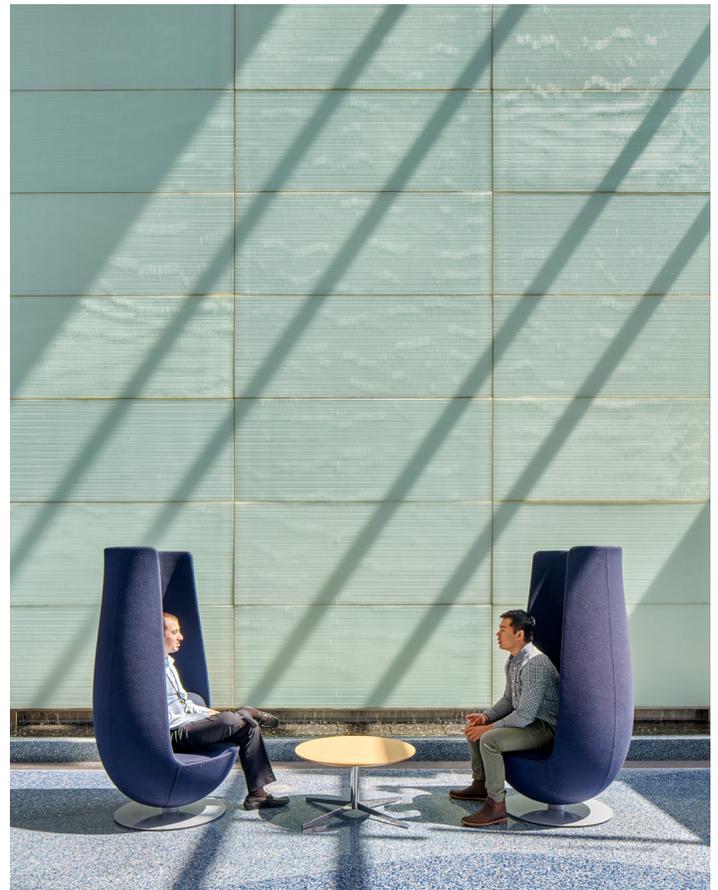
Collaboration and communication now flow through the variety of social spaces that allow for serendipitous interactions, as employees “bump into each other” throughout the day.





“People are working a little bit differently here. After about a month of being here, people were utilizing the collaboration areas. They were having impromptu meetings throughout the building.”

Linda Sullivan
CFO, Retired
American Water



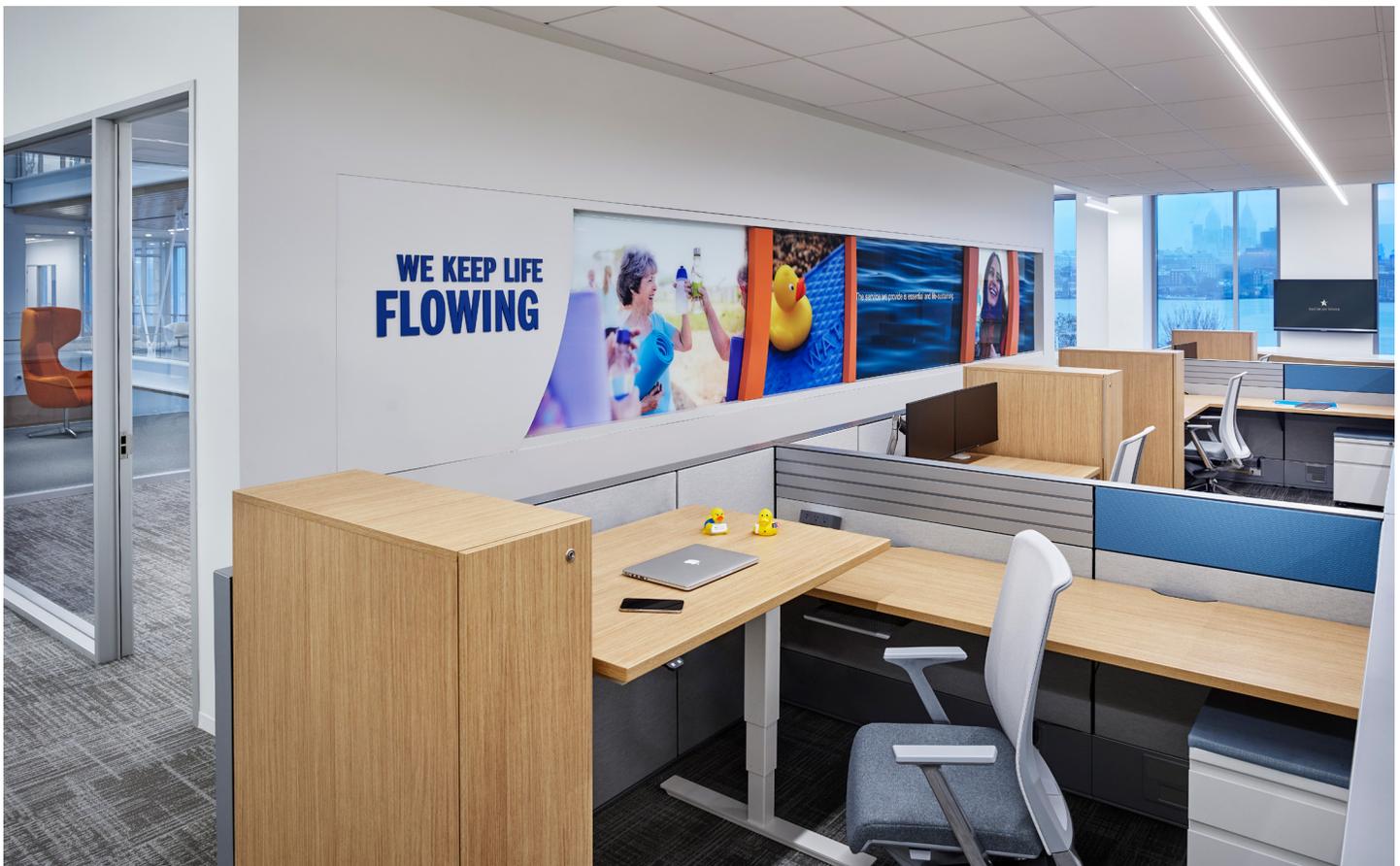
Flexible, Supportive Spaces

American Water also heard—through surveys and dialogue—that employees craved openness, ease of collaboration, and more non-traditional workspaces. To offer people flexibility and choice in settings that support the ways they want to work, recharge, and network, a variety of comfortable social spaces were added throughout the building—and outside, as well.

Access to daylight and dramatic views of the river and Philadelphia skyline are abundant throughout these social spaces, as well as individual workstations, to help keep creativity and inspiration flowing. This is courtesy of expansive windows and low panels that provide a level of privacy for focus work yet allow the easy communication and community inclusion employees requested. Wi-fi enabled outdoor terraces with lounge furnishings offer open-air workspaces and gathering spots, while the on-campus riverfront park lets people take a walk, enjoy the view, and get some fresh air.

Inspiring Workspaces

Individual workstations have height-adjustable desks, access to daylight, and incredible outdoor views to support well-being and inspire creativity.

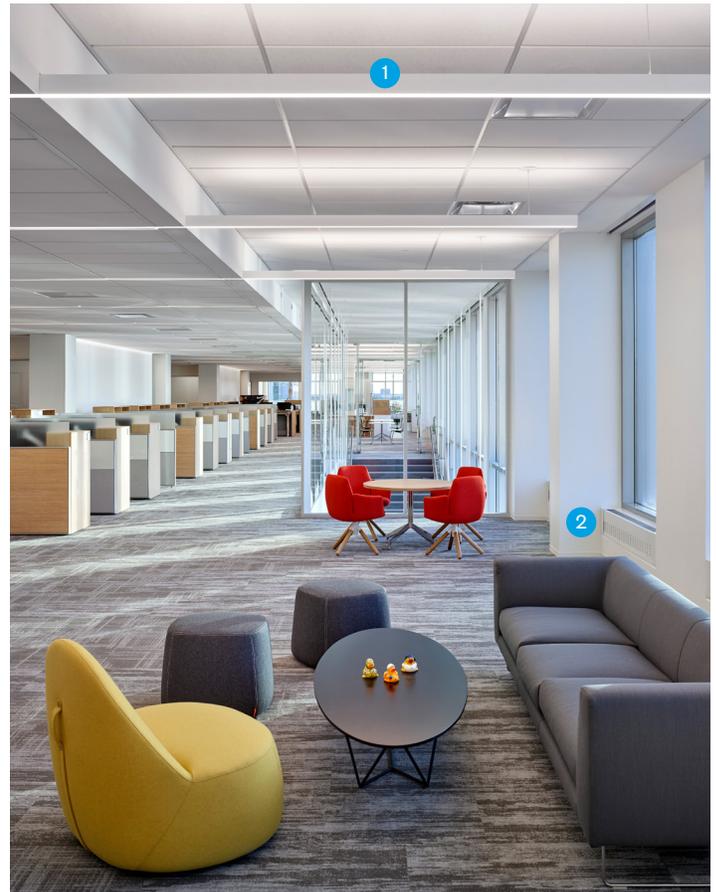


“This building is spectacular. It’s overwhelming in a good way. I enjoy coming to work every day and I think people are very happy to come to work in this building.”

Adam Landis
Facilities Manager
American Water

Striving for LEED Platinum

- 1 LED lighting
- 2 High-efficiency HVAC systems
- 3 Recyclable construction materials
- 4 Rainwater used for non-potable water needs



Creating the Future

American Water is now primed for recruiting top talent who not only want to work in a modern facility with terrific amenities, but also want to be a part of a social community that merges work, well-being, and personal interests—an important driver for attracting the Millennial workforce. The company empowers employees to build relationships with the local community through various outreach programs, including a mentorship program that shares knowledge with Camden students about careers they could one day have in the water industry.

With their new headquarters campus at the center, American Water has truly built ongoing, cyclical support for their brand, culture, and well-being. Employees are drawn to the communal culture, and that culture is preserved and carried on by those same people—into the future.





Customer Profile

With a history dating back to 1886, American Water is the largest and most geographically diverse US publicly traded water and wastewater utility company. The company employs more than 7,100 dedicated professionals who provide regulated and market-based drinking water, wastewater, and other related services to more than 14 million people in 46 states. American Water provides safe, clean, affordable, and reliable water services to customers to keep their lives flowing.

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