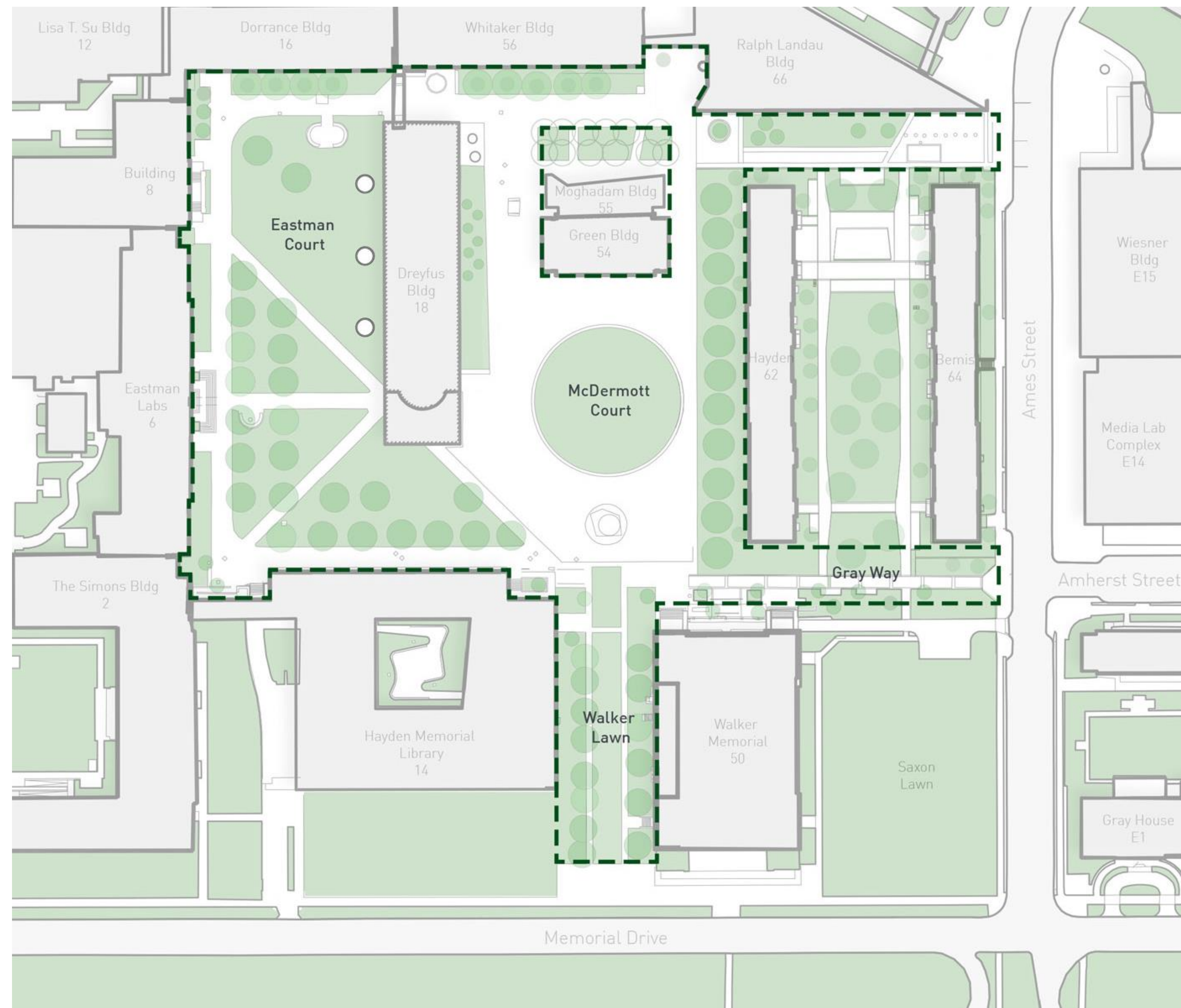




EASTMAN & McDERMOTT
COURTS RENEWAL

Exploring the revitalization of Eastman & McDermott Courts





The Eastman & McDermott Courts Renewal Project aims to balance the needs of twenty-first-century open space users with improved ecological function and the mindful stewardship of this area's twentieth-century modernist design heritage.

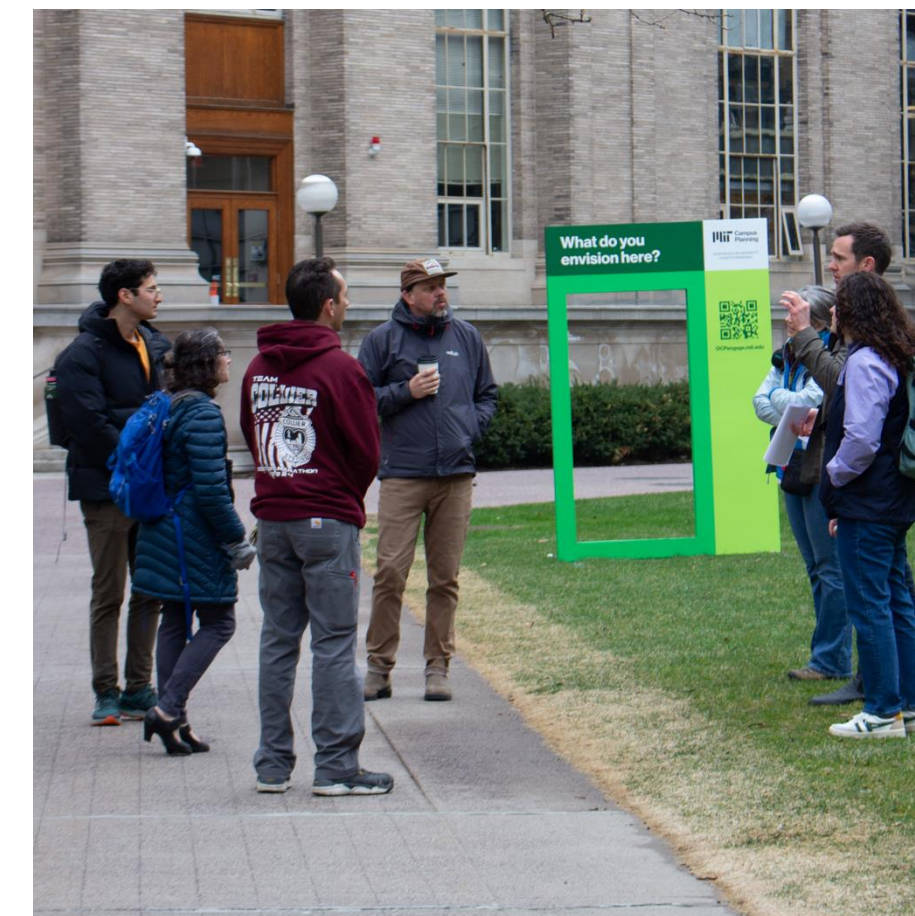
Engaging the MIT Community, April 2024



Pop ups

Four quick, high-level engagement sessions with the MIT community in Eastman & McDermott Courts as people were naturally using them and passing through.

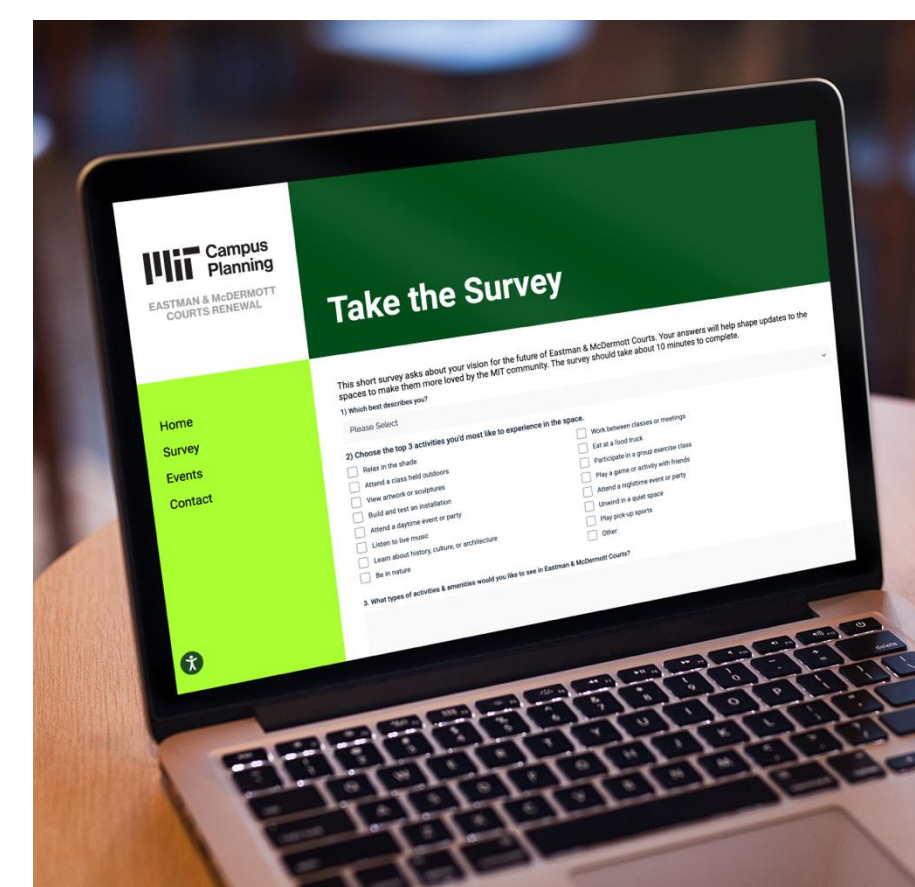
385 Participants



Focus Groups & Walkshops

Focused conversations for deeper engagement with more invested users to understand how they currently use and would like to use Eastman & McDermott Courts.

2 virtual focus groups (9 attendees)
3 walkshops (10 attendees)



Online Survey

A short online survey to engage broadly with the MIT community and understand their goals and vision for Eastman & McDermott Courts.

Survey ran April 2-30, 2024

432 responses:
225 students, 61 staff, 19 faculty, 5 visitors, 122 unidentified/other

Balancing viewpoints

Some survey respondents expressed opposing viewpoints. These perspectives and amenities will need to be balanced in the Courts.



Public-feeling spaces

"I'd be much more likely to spend time there if it served a purpose that we don't already have on campus. There are already so many study spaces on campus, or quiet outdoor spaces, etc. We don't have many social spaces!"

and



Private-feeling spaces

"I would like it if there were comfortable, secluded areas to sit and enjoy nature. I want to be able to read a book in dappled sunlight."



Quiet spaces

"It would be amazing to have flowers and a path with a peace pole for quiet contemplation and outdoor meditation."

and



Spaces with audible noise

"I'd love an open social space where people can meet up, sit around and talk, be louder than is appropriate indoors, and just have fun."



Spaces to play

"Something that allows students to do something other than constantly work because all of campus feels like it's pressuring us to always be studying!! Something where i can move without feeling like I'm in the gym, somewhere where i can relax and play games with my friends and hang out and be silly!"

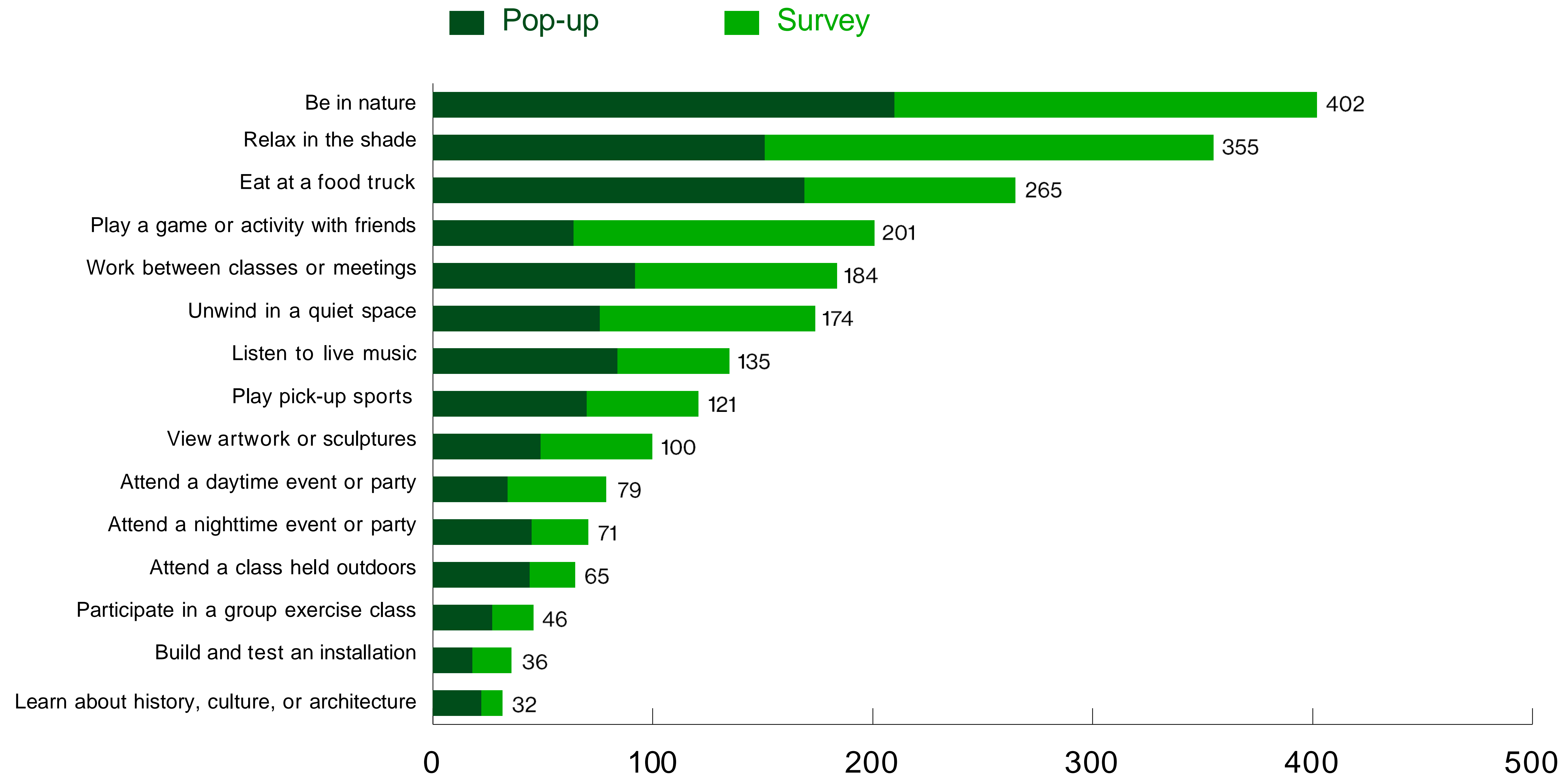
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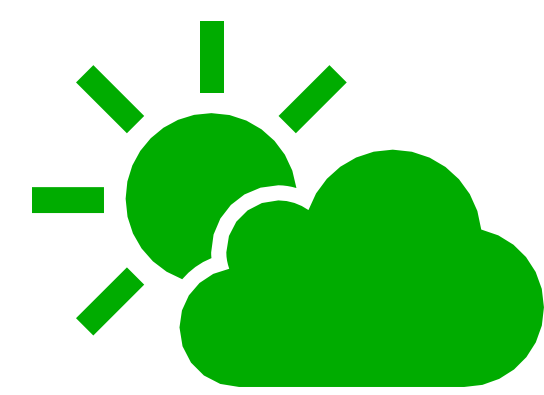
Spaces to work

"...some of us are trying to get research done [and] it's already noisy enough."

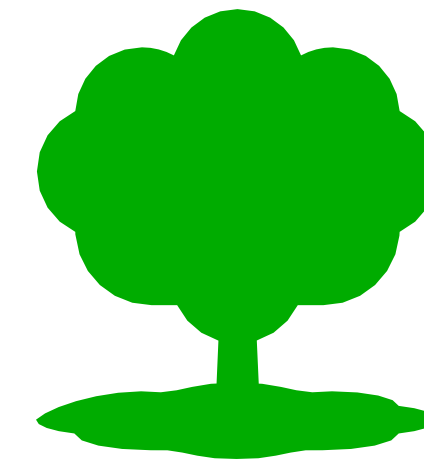
Which 3 activities would you most like to experience in the space?



Top 5 activities



Be in nature



Relax in the shade



Eat at a food truck



**Play a game or
activity with friends**



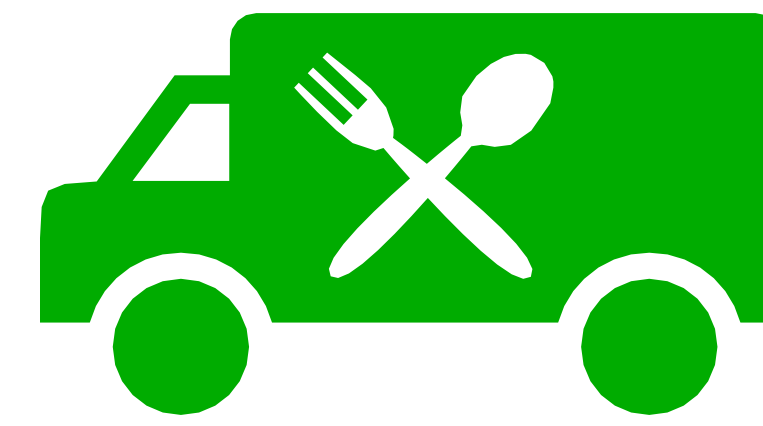
**Work between
classes or meetings**

Common desired features & uses



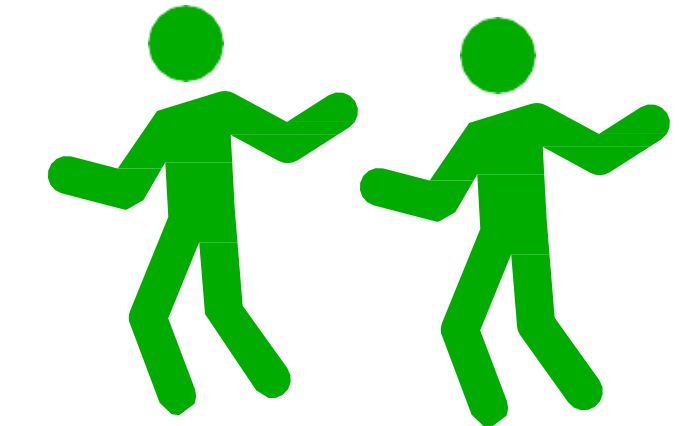
Seating

There was a strong demand for various types of seating, including tables, chairs, hammocks, and shaded areas to create comfortable spaces for both socializing and working outdoors.



Food

Many respondents expressed a desire for more food options, such as food trucks and snack stands, especially given the limited current availability on campus.



Play

The idea of having play areas was frequently mentioned, highlighting a desire for playful and recreational activities that provide stress relief and a break from academic pressures.



Active Uses

Respondents suggested numerous active uses for the space, including sports facilities, fitness equipment, outdoor games, and spaces for classes or meetings to encourage physical activity and community engagement.



Quiet/Contemplative Uses

Many respondents requested tranquil spaces for quiet activities, such as reading, relaxing, or simply enjoying nature, emphasizing the need for a peaceful environment away from the campus hustle.



Swings

Respondents expressed a desire for spaces that facilitate various recreational activities, such as sports courts for volleyball and pickleball, spaces for bocce ball, spike ball, and frisbee, and/or giant games like Jenga and chess.



Hammocks

Multiple respondents suggested placing hammocks between trees or in shaded areas to provide a tranquil spot for students to unwind, relax, and even work outdoors. The idea of hammocks was associated with creating a soothing and inviting environment that contrasts with the high-stress academic atmosphere.



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Principles & Vision Story

A place to experience nature

A place that feels like a break from the surrounding buildings and the demands of higher learning. Lush landscape, pollinator gardens, native plantings, etc.

Spaces for gathering and physical activity

Comfortable seating and shaded tables for all seasons and times of day where people can enjoy a meal or meet with friends. Active spaces for small games that encourage students to swing, climb, and play.

Quiet spaces that offer retreat

Quiet seating and tables separate from the action where people can read a book, get some deep work done, or simply unwind. Adequate wifi and power for computer work. Spaces that serve as year-round, peaceful escapes from the demands of campus life.

Food

Nearby cafes, coffee carts and spots for food trucks or other culinary offerings that turn the Courts into a hub for convenient and casual bites.

Art & science- themed installations

Use the space as a format to expand the public art collection at MIT. Include physical & natural science-themed installations that play off the work happening in nearby buildings, such as pavers that represent geological time, a sphere depicting the layers of the earth, etc.

Accessible & community- focused

A landscape that integrates accessible and inclusive design features. Limited vehicle and equipment access so that the Courts feel like spaces for the MIT community first and vehicles second.