

To: Natick 360 SPOC
From: Matt Gardner
Date: March 31, 2007
Re: Natick High School Class Visits



Dear Colleagues:

On 3 days in March I visited 90 students in 5 junior and senior-level social studies classes at Natick High School to present Natick 360, discuss Town Government and solicit feedback on the Values and Vision statements.

All in all, the response was quite positive. The students were engaged for the most part, and seemed to appreciate the opportunity to participate in such a process. Their feedback was useful although it tended to avoid the higher level strategic issues and focus more on their particular wants and needs. There were three very consistent messages that I heard:

- the students like the Natick Mall, a lot.
- they consider their town “boring”
- they are very upset at the “Redmen” name change
- they are not satisfied with the condition of the High School
- a surprising number of these 16-17 year olds expressed a desire for bars or nightclubs downtown.

Specific feedback and/or additions to the Values and Visions statements:

- They tended to share the value of Natick’s small town feel, safety and sense of community, although a few specifically spoke of the town being “too small”.
- They showed an interest in the condition of the roads, particularly Route 9.
- The students generally liked Natick’s natural resources, forests, beaches etc.
- A number of students expressed strong support and appreciation for TCAN.
- A few students explicitly noted that they did not think they could afford to live in town after they graduate HS or College.
- They almost universally felt that Natick needed to consider their needs more often
- They expressed great skepticism about the quality of education they are receiving or that future generations could expect from Natick’s schools.
- They had a hard time understanding the concept and/or the importance of the last vision bullet.
- Several students value the diversity of the town (although we did not have time to dig into what exactly they meant by diversity)
- Natick Center was seen as quite important to the community
- Some students expressed concern over the condition of the beaches and water bodies in town.
- A number of students expressed a desire to get involved in the town, possibly through the Youth Advisory Board.