

March 5, 2022

Re: Self Service Gas Station Article

Chair and Board Members,

Articles for self-service stations appear every few years.

Allowing self-service gas stations in Arlington has only one possible benefit, lower gas prices.

However, if you have noticed driving through surrounding towns or looking at GasBuddy.com, a web site with live gas prices (sample from 3/6 attached), Arlington's low price gas stations have always been competitive with self-service prices, sometimes lower, sometimes a little higher.

Since there is little to no benefit to self-service stations, what are the negatives?

Arlington gas stations are almost all (maybe all) independent small businesses.

Self-service are usually chain or corporate operations.

Gresham's law, in a gas station corollary, shows, as seen in other towns and cities, which allow self-serve, that, over time, self-serve drives out full serve.

This will accelerate the change of gas station locations to other uses.

Arlington gas stations are also service stations; a place to take your car to be fixed.

Service stations are usually faster and less expensive than Dealership service.

Self-service stations typically have no service.

As service stations disappear, there is less choice for Arlington residents to find a place to have their cars fixed.

Vehicles have to be inspected every year. Most service stations do inspections.

Self-service typically have minimal staffing and do not do inspections.

As the end of the month draws near, there are often lines at service stations to get a sticker.

Where will those Arlington residents go as lines get longer and longer as there are less sticker stations?

Self-Serve stations often have an attached convenience store.

This is nice, but will put economic pressure on Arlington's long time existing stand alone convenience stores.

As electric vehicles become more prevalent, there will need to be more places to charge them and service them. Existing gas stations are a natural location for this.

Equity is a trendy consideration lately. More well off people, with newer cars, do not have to worry about keeping an older vehicle functioning. Those of lesser means benefit from a neighborhood service station. Newer cars can be dropped off at the dealership for a sticker with a shuttle ride to work, not a choice for others.

Removing options and choice for those not as economically well off is not equitable.

The elderly and disabled are treated just like everyone else at Arlington service stations.

Self-serve stations may have full serve pumps, at higher cost and additional wait time.

The most obvious negative is weather and convenience.

How many days are just the right temperature and humidity when you wouldn't mind getting out of the car to pump your gas?

Certainly not between November and April, with cold, or biting cold, temperatures, wind driven snow, or cold rain, stinging your face, slush on the ground to walk through.

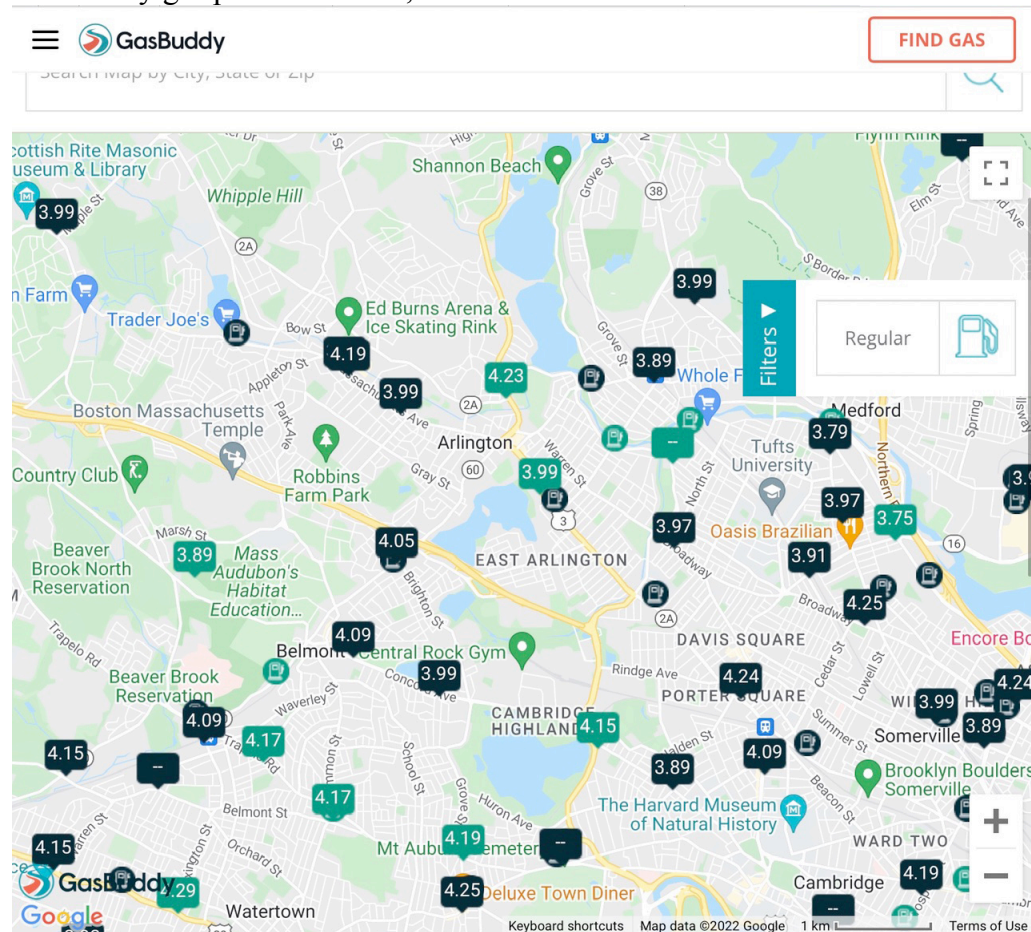
Certainly not in the dog days of summer with high temperatures, humidity and your clothes sticking to your skin as you watch the gas meter spinning.

Not when you are on the way to work or an event, nicely dressed, dreading a splash of gas which smell will linger for hours.

Please continue to let Arlington residents and visitors benefit from full service gas stations by recommending no action on the self-service article.

Stephen Blagden

Gas Buddy gas prices March 6, 2022



See what gas prices are around the country at a glance. Areas are color coded according to their price for the average price for regular unleaded gasoline.