



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

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JEAN-DANIEL NOLAND

Chair

ROBERT J. BENFATTO, JR., ESQ.

District Manager

December 19, 2007

John B. Hess

Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer

HESS Corporation

1185 Avenue of the Americas

New York, NY 10036

Re: Safe Route to School – P.S. 51

Dear Mr. Hess:

Manhattan Community Board 4 requests your help insuring the safety of our schoolchildren and neighbors. Community Board 4 represents Clinton, Hell's Kitchen and Chelsea neighborhoods. This includes P.S. 51, an elementary school on West 45th Street, which is located 50 feet west of your gas station, at 502 W. 45th Street (Tenth Avenue between 44th and 45th Streets). This school has existed at this location for generations, the oldest public school in Hell's Kitchen.

At our last month Full Board meeting, many parents came and testified about the dangerous conditions their children experience on their way to school. At the PTA (Parents Teachers Association) Chair's request, our office organized two site visits with representatives from the NYC Department of Transportation (DOT), the Taxi and Limousine Commission, and the NYPD. Mr. Lautenbacher represented Hess at the first visit but did not attend the second one.

At these visits cars were observed entering the station at high speed, traveling counter to traffic on Tenth Avenue, entering through the pedestrian ramp on 45th Street, or using the whole length of the sidewalk to reach the pumps. With occurrences every few minutes, these behaviors seem to be the norm rather than the exception. It was evident to our group that the station configuration encourages reckless driving by the station customers. We fear that someone will be hurt if the structural problem is not addressed.

To improve the safety, NYC DOT is improving signage and parking rules in the vicinity of the school. NYPD has committed to post officers to enforce the traffic laws. However, these measures will only be effective if changes are made to how the station interacts with the sidewalks and the street. The suggested changes come in two categories:

- (1) Create a highly visible, controlled vehicle flow in and out of the station, and
- (2) Physically separate the station property dedicated to Hess customers from the sidewalk dedicated to pedestrians. This can be addressed with trees, plants, paint, and a few signs, in sum a low cost, green solution (see attached).

The Board appreciates the station management's social responsibility and the efforts they have made to keep the children safe on their way to school. At school closing time, the personnel routinely moves

police barriers to cut off temporarily the traffic at the three curb cuts on West 45th Street. Plus, the station is immaculate and a very good neighbor.

Hess has a reputation of being community and environmentally friendly. We hope you will look favorably upon our request and bring the urgency to this situation. The Board is confident these changes will enhance your customers experience as well as bring positive impact to the community. We are at your disposal to review film footage of the incidents or discuss solutions that will be best for both Hess and the community.

Sincerely,



Jean-Daniel Noland
Chair
Manhattan Community
Board No. 4



Jay Marcus
Co-Chair
Transportation Planning
Committee



Christine Berthet
Co-Chair
Transportation Planning
Committee

Cc: Electeds
NYC DOT
NYPD
TLC

Community Board 4 - Suggested Changes



Create a highly visible controlled vehicle flow in and out of the station

1. reconfigure curb cuts to 2 on each of the three sides and locate them at least 20 feet away from intersections and/or pedestrian crossings
2. Make the curb cuts on the school sidewalk narrower to discourage speeding.
3. organize the flow of cars in entrances and exits and affix such markings on both the ground with white arrows and by posting vertical signage onto the street side of exit bay: "wrong way" on the street side and stop on the station side
4. post a warning sign at each entrance showing "slow, children at play"
5. delineate these curb cuts with white markings on the sidewalk to separate vehicle space for pedestrian space

Physically separate the station property used by customers from the sidewalk used by pedestrians:

1. Create "green" separation at the station periphery. The city has embarked to plant one million trees. The sidewalks are quite large. This would be an ideal location to install trees and greenery in a continuous bed on the station side and normal trees on the street side.