



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD FOUR

330 West 42nd Street, 26th floor New York, NY 10036
tel: 212-736-4536 fax: 212-947-9512
www.ManhattanCB4.org

J. LEE COMPTON
Chair

ROBERT J. BENFATTO, JR., ESQ.
District Manager

March 9, 2007

Paul J. Cosgrave
Commissioner
Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications
75 Park Place, 9th Floor
New York, New York 10007

Re: Removal of phone booth on northwest corner of 45th Street and 9th Avenue

Dear Commissioner Cosgrave:

Shortly before 9 a.m. on Friday, February 23, Nina Petrow was hit by an Academy bus as she was crossing 45th Street on the west side of Ninth Avenue in midtown Manhattan. Ms. Petrow was on the marked crosswalk, the walk sign was on, she had the right of way. The bus was making a right hand turn onto 45th Street. The driver says he did not see anyone. Ms. Petrow, 55 years old, was pronounced dead on the scene at 9:05 a.m.

A former member of Community Board 4 who happened on the scene said her body had been carried almost 10 feet from the crosswalk and her walker another 5 feet.

This is the second time in recent memory that someone on that cross walk, having the right of way, has been killed by a bus turning west from Ninth Avenue. After a man, Mr. Walker, was run over several years ago, the Department of Transportation installed a Yield to Pedestrians sign on the southwest corner of 45th Street. The sign is on top 2 other traffic signs, about 15 feet high on a lightpole. We do not know if the driver saw the sign either.

More importantly, we do not know if it is even possible for a driver and a pedestrian to see each other at this intersection at certain critical moments. We are extremely concerned that the super sized, double phone booth/advertising edifice on Ninth Avenue near the northwest corner of West 45th Street, may block not only the backward or side glance of someone crossing the street but also may impede the view of a driver making a right hand turn onto 45th Street. This double phone booth should be removed immediately (see attached letter from Manhattan Precinct North).

Removing the phone booth at this location should not be an inconvenience to the dwindling number of enthusiasts of outdoor public phone booths as there are 7 (!) outdoor phones within 50 feet of the corner to accommodate their dialing needs. Why 9 public phones were placed in such close proximity to each other is incomprehensible to this Board. More troubling, however, is why an 8 foot tall by 6 foot wide visual barrier was placed so close to this dangerous intersection.

Ninth Avenue has become increasingly congested by vehicular traffic. It is important that visibility from vehicles be as unimpeded as possible at the crosswalks where a fatal encounter between a motor vehicle and a human is unfortunately a very real possibility.

We also urgently request that DOITT immediately look at other large phone booths on Ninth Avenue near an intersection to determine if they, too, are an impediment to the line of sight between driver and pedestrian.

We look forward to your response to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lee Compton', written in a cursive style.

Lee Compton

cc: Margaret Forgione, DOT
Electeds
etc.