

Mayor's column for
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Have you wondered why all the “legalized graffiti” is showing up on the streets of Edmonds? Multicolored lines, arrows, and initials are appearing in neighborhoods across the city. I have received some phone calls and so has engineering staff, so here's what's causing the rainbow effect on your street...

Verizon is installing the fiber lines for their “FTTP” service, which is scheduled to arrive in your home, for a price, this year or next. FTTP means “fiber to the premises.” They call it “FiOS.” Better still, it means that they are installing the fiber-optic lines that will allow them to bring you faster internet service, high-definition television, and phone service. This service is new to Verizon, but on balance is quite similar to what Comcast is already providing their customers.

Comcast is the local provider for television service in Edmonds, and Verizon doesn't have a franchise in place with the City to also provide television to their customers. So even after their underground/overhead work is finished, they will only be able to provide phone and internet service to their customers until they have reached agreement with the City on the television aspect. Negotiations are scheduled to begin with Verizon next week.

Another question that I have heard is, “Why are they placing more lines on telephone poles?” The answer is that where they have existing overhead lines now, they can replace them with new lines. If they are currently providing underground service, then they must continue to do so. Some of their overhead work to date has been less than perfect. I have spoken to their local project manager (who is an Edmonds resident) and he agrees that there are some things that could have been done in a more aesthetic fashion. In fact, he drove through the city and made a list far more detailed than I had of improvements that needed to be “cleaned up.” I thank him for his diligence.

Our underground infrastructure is home to some basic delivery systems to your homes. Just for fun, and maybe for educational purposes, here is what each of the colors spray painted on the streets denotes: red means electric power lines, yellow is for gas or oil, orange is cable and phone, blue is for water lines, green is for sewer, pink or purple is for surveys, and white is for proposed excavation.

Finally, as you look out over your domain, you may see some of these colors painted in your garden or on your lawn, and you may be thinking that someone is coming to dig up your yard! Over the course of many years, our gardens and lawns have slowly encroached into the City's right-of-way, and while we don't normally take issue with that, the property still belongs to the City and could possibly be dug up by Verizon in the course of their work. They are attempting to leave these areas as they found them, and I'm sure will work with you as best they can.

The rainbow being painted on the streets of Edmonds today will lead to a brighter telecommunications future for Edmonds residents in the years ahead!