

City of Crest Hill

CONSOLIDATED STRATEGY,
MARKETING MANAGEMENT & REPORTING

Presented by Method Engine, LLC

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Contact:

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Introduction

Method Engine is a Chicago-based digital strategy agency with deep experience serving governmental, educational, and healthcare organizations, helping them strengthen communications, streamline digital services, and engage their communities more effectively.

Our portfolio includes partnerships with civic clients as well as leading institutions such as The University of Chicago, Chicago Children's Museum, Ingalls Health System, Lincoln Center, Kohler Pro, and Mitsubishi Materials.

With expertise spanning strategy, branding, interactive design, and digital advertising, we combine strategic insight, creative storytelling, and technical execution to deliver solutions that are both impactful and sustainable, making us a trusted partner for organizations committed to transparency, growth, and community connection.

Approach

Method Engine will partner with the City of Crest Hill to gain a clear understanding of the City's priorities and marketing objectives as they stand today. This discovery process will be both thorough and collaborative, ensuring that our efforts reflect the organization's vision while staying rooted in the needs of the community.

From there, we will work together to identify and prioritize the digital marketing tactics most effective in advancing those goals. Our approach balances strategic impact with transparency, focusing on initiatives that deliver measurable results while strengthening engagement with residents.

We are starting with a conservative allocation of hours and fees, designed to be used thoughtfully and efficiently. This ensures that the City's most pressing needs are addressed first, while also laying the foundation for future growth and long-term success. The areas of focus are summarized as follows:

Areas of Focus

Our initial collaboration will concentrate on the following priorities, ensuring that resources are directed where they will have the greatest impact:

1. Digital Presence & Visibility

- Strengthening the City's online presence through updated content, improved navigation, and accessible design.
- Ensure residents can easily find essential information and services, while reinforcing Crest Hill's identity as a welcoming, forward-thinking community.

2. Community Engagement & Communication

- Expand the City's ability to connect with residents through timely updates, newsletters, and social media outreach.
- Highlight events, initiatives, and opportunities that foster civic pride and participation.

3. Operational Efficiency & Support

- Streamline digital tools that make everyday tasks easier for residents (bill payments, service requests, alerts).
- Provide marketing support that reduces administrative burden and helps City staff focus on serving the community.

Goals & Objectives

The City of Crest Hill's official website serves three critical purposes:

- (1) providing essential public service information
- (2) enabling resident engagement and convenience
- (3) promoting community identity and development.

1. Public Service Information & Transparency

For the **city**, the website is a central hub to communicate official updates, policies, and infrastructure projects. For **residents**, it ensures access to reliable information about daily life and civic responsibilities.

- **City purposes:**
 - Share updates on water supply projects, roadway improvements, and public works notices.
 - Publish financial transparency reports and ordinances to maintain accountability.
 - Provide emergency alerts and community safety information through the Smart Message Alert Network.
- **Resident purposes:**
 - Stay informed about construction projects, water service line programs, and environmental initiatives.
 - Access council minutes, codes of ordinances, and consumer confidence reports for water quality.
 - Understand city operations and hours of service for departments like police, public works, and city hall.

2. Resident Engagement & Convenience

The site is designed to make civic participation and everyday tasks easier.

- **City purposes:**
 - Reduce administrative burden by offering online services (bill payments, ticket payments, employment applications).
 - Encourage volunteerism and participation in programs like the Teen Connection.
 - Provide calendars and newsletters to keep residents connected to city activities.
- **Resident purposes:**
 - Pay water bills or tickets online without visiting city offices.
 - Sign up for notifications, access recycling and waste service calendars, and track holiday closures.
 - Find helpful numbers for quick access to city departments and related services.

3. Community Identity & Development

The website also functions as a platform to highlight Crest Hill's culture, growth, and opportunities.

- **City purposes:**
 - Showcase Crest Hill's economic development initiatives and strategic location for businesses.
 - Promote city events like Winter Fest, decorating contests, and food drives to strengthen community ties.
 - Recognize achievements such as financial reporting excellence and infrastructure milestones.
- **Resident purposes:**
 - Discover local events, healthy living resources, and community organizations.
 - Explore real estate, education, and economic development opportunities.
 - Celebrate civic pride through contests, festivals, and citywide initiatives.

The Crest Hill website is not just an administrative tool—it's a **bridge between city governance and residents' daily lives**, balancing transparency, convenience, and community identity. It helps the city manage operations efficiently while empowering residents to stay informed, engaged, and connected.

Implementation Tactics & Deliverables

Marketing Strategy, Creative Support & Consultation

- Audience research, segmentation, and primary persona development.
- Competitor research for industry positioning & value.
- Key message and content strategy.
- Recommendations with tactical action steps.

Website Content Additions, Updates & Maintenance

- Site Copy & Image Updates, Additions & Refinements
- WordPress Site & Theme Updates & Plug-In Checks, Back Ups & Security
- Digital Marketing Performance, Tracking & Reporting
- Preliminary SEO Implementation
- GA4 Set Up & Google My Business Listing Support
- On-Going Website & Digital Marketing Performance Analysis & Reporting

On-Going Marketing Support Activities

Include but not limited to....

- Brand Standards Guidelines
- Print & Digital Support Materials
- Trade Show Presence
- Social Media Set Up & On-Going Support
- E-Mail Marketing
- PR Facilitation
- SEO Optimization(s)
- Management, Direction and Alignment for all marketing collaboration resources as needed.

ACTIVITY & FEE SUMMARY

ESTIMATED AVERAGE MONTHLY RANGE: [REDACTED]/month*

Resources: Resource types available that may be assigned and utilized based upon need could include, but are not limited to:

- Client Partner
- Fractional CMO (advisory role)
- Digital Project & Account Manager
- Business & Marketing Strategist
- Brand Strategist & Creative Director
- Technology Strategist
- Senior Designer
- Senior Developer/Programmer
- Social Media Manager
- Copywriter(s)
- Communication & Content Specialist(s)

Value Statement

Purpose and Intent

These Terms and Conditions are established to ensure that the City receives services in a manner that is transparent, accountable, and fiscally responsible. The intent is to balance flexibility in project execution with safeguards that protect the City's interests, ensuring that resources are used efficiently and deliverables are clearly documented.

Commitment to Partnership

The Contractor and the City acknowledge that successful outcomes depend on clear communication, mutual trust, and measurable progress. Accordingly, these provisions are designed not to restrict collaboration, but to provide clarity, consistency, and confidence in the management of public funds.

Transparency and Accountability

By requiring itemized billing, defined personnel roles, and monthly reporting, the City can evaluate the value of services rendered and ensure that work performed aligns with agreed objectives. The Contractor benefits from clear expectations, while the City benefits from reliable oversight and predictable costs.

Terms & Conditions

1. Personnel and Billing Rates

- 1.1 Contractor shall provide the City with a schedule of personnel assigned to the Project, including each individual's name, title, role, and hourly billing rate.
- 1.2 No blended or median billing rates shall be applied unless expressly disclosed. Each individual's actual rate must be disclosed and billed accordingly.
- 1.3 Rates are variable based upon the resource types utilized.
- 1.4 The applicable hourly rates for services performed under this Agreement shall be as set forth in Exhibit A – ME Rate Structure (2025–2026).
- 1.5 Contractor shall provide advance notice of any rate changes beyond the ranges specified in Exhibit A and obtain written approval from the City prior to implementation.

Exhibit A – ME Rate Structure (2025–2026)

Resource Type	Junior	Midlevel	Senior
Account Management	████	████	████
Strategy & Research	████	████	████
Branding & Design	████	████	████
Copywriting & Content Creation	████	████	████
Interactive Application Development	████	████	████
Interactive Design & UX	████	████	████
Digital Advertising (SEM, SEO, PPC)	████	████	████
Public Relations & Media Relations	████	████	████
Social Media & Email Marketing	████	████	████

2. Monthly Fee Cap and Hourly Estimates

- 2.1 Compensation under this Agreement shall not exceed █████ per calendar month without the prior written consent of the City.
- 2.2 Contractor estimates that services will require an average of 20–24 hours per month across all resources.
- 2.3 Monthly billing shall be based upon actual time incurred by required resources and is expected to fall within the estimated range.
- 2.4 In months where fewer than 20 hours are utilized, the total invoiced amount may be less than the lower limit of the estimate.
- 2.5 If actual time incurred in any given month is expected to exceed the upper limit of 24 hours, Contractor shall first obtain written authorization from the City of Crest Hill prior to exceeding such limit.
- 2.6 Any single assignment that cannot be completed within the monthly hourly allocations, or that exceeds 10 hours, may require a separate quotation and may be billed independently of the monthly estimate.

3. Itemized Invoicing

3.1 Contractor shall submit monthly invoices to the City that include, at a minimum:

- The name and role of each individual who performed services;
- The hourly rate applied;
- The number of hours worked;
- A description of the tasks performed.

3.2 Invoices that do not meet these requirements may be rejected by the City until corrected.

3.3 Contractor shall maintain detailed time records and make such records available to the City upon request.

4. Approval of Work

4.1 The City shall designate a Project Manager or Authorized Representative to review and approve all work performed prior to payment.

4.2 Contractor shall not undertake work outside the agreed scope without prior written authorization from the City's Authorized Representative.

5. Scope Changes

5.1 If the scope of the Project changes significantly from the description in this Agreement, Contractor shall notify the City of Crest Hill of any cost variations prior to the completion of work.

5.2 Requests made beyond the scope of this Agreement shall be estimated separately and submitted to the City for review and approval prior to work proceeding.

6. Expenses

6.1 Expenses related to this Project shall be billed in addition to Professional Fees as outlined in this Agreement.

6.2 Expenses may include, but are not limited to: travel, lodging, parking, delivery services.

7. Billing and Payment Terms

7.1 Work shall be billed as it progresses monthly.

7.2 Payments are due within thirty (30) days from receipt of invoice.

7.3 A service charge of three percent (3%) per month may be applied to past due accounts.

8. Limitation of Liability

8.1 Contractor and the City agree to limit liabilities and any damage claims to an amount no greater than the total contract value.

8.2 The City agrees to remove all liability from Contractor for consequential damages.

9. Warranty and Acceptance

9.1 Contractor offers a warranty period of no more than ninety (90) days past delivery for all work provided.

9.2 Final payment constitutes acceptance of the work "as is."

9.3 Any further edits, revisions, or changes after acceptance shall require a new agreement or may be billed on a time-and-materials basis with the express written consent of the City of Crest Hill.

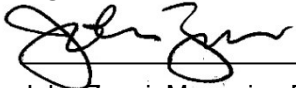
9.4 Contractor offers no guarantees of the results of work performed.

10. Dispute Resolution

10.1 All disputes and contract breaches shall be addressed through mediation and binding arbitration in the State of Illinois, Cook County.

10.2 Any litigation arising under this Agreement shall be conducted in the State of Illinois, Cook County.

SUBMITTED BY:



John Zoppi, Managing Partner
METHOD ENGINE, LLC

APPROVED BY:



Raymond R. Soliman, Mayor
CITY OF CREST HILL