

OPINION

Belle Isle — imagine the possibilities

Let's hope that Edsel Ford II's call to action for the rehabilitation of Belle Isle helps build momentum around existing efforts.

Ford made his plea as *Crain's* Newsmaker of the Year at a luncheon speech this week, describing the park as "a little bit of a stepchild." (*See story, Page 3.*)

Ford also gave a salute to the Belle Isle Women's Committee, which is seeking to raise money for improvements on the island. The group's initial goal is \$100,000, but anyone who has been to the island lately knows that it will take much more than that to accomplish what's needed.

Still, the island is now someone's No. 1 priority, which is vital.

An example to aim for would be Stanley Park, the island park of Vancouver, British Columbia.

Established in 1889 for "the use and enjoyment of people of all colors, creeds and customs for all time," the island park boasts a paved path around the island with lanes for pedestrians, bicyclists and inline skaters; walking trails, an aquarium, gardens, a beach, tennis courts, par-3 golf and a petting zoo.

The park is jammed with users in its most public locations and yet provides areas of solitude. Benches donated as memorials can be found throughout the park.

In short, it's similar to what Belle Isle once was and could be again. We just need the collective will to make it happen.