

# Council Agenda Item 26-0179R



**MEETING DATE:** 03/23/2026

**SUBJECT/TITLE:** Resolution authorizing a memorandum of agreement with the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office regarding the Chester Bowl Chalet demolition and replacement.

**SUBMITTED BY:** Katie Bennett, Senior Parks Planner

**RECOMMENDATION:** Approve

**BOARD/COMMISSION/COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:** The proposed demolition and replacement of the Chester Bowl Thom Storm Chalet was presented at the Duluth Heritage Preservation Commission (HPC) at their August 11 and September 8, 2025, meetings. The HPC raised no objections to the project, and in a unanimous vote at the September 8 meeting, the commissioners found that the Chalet did not qualify for designation as a local landmark.

During consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office, it was determined that the demolition and replacement of the existing chalet will have an adverse effect on the Chester Park Historic District, which required the development of a memorandum of agreement to describe the mitigation measures. On March 9, 2026, staff presented the memorandum of agreement to the Heritage Preservation Commission for review as a consulting party and the commissioners unanimously approved moving the agreement forward.

**PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION:** Resolution 24-0229R authorized application to the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources, Environmental and Natural Resources Trust Fund for up to \$2,850,000 to complete a renovation of the Thom Storm Chalet and Outdoor Recreation Center at Chester Park, and resolution 25-0790R authorized acceptance of the awarded grant of \$2,312,000. Resolution 25-0066R authorized a request for HUD Federal Community Development Block Grant funds for the 2025 program year, which included an allocation of \$90,000 for the Chester Bowl Chalet renovation and expansion.

Resolution 25-0082R authorized a three-year agreement with the Chester Bowl Improvement Club for the operation and management of Chester Bowl Park and Chalet. Resolution 25-0789R authorized a development agreement with the Chester Bowl Improvement Club for the demolition and replacement of the Tom Storm Chalet at Chester Park, and resolution 26-0046R authorized the first amendment to the development agreement to incorporate the acceptance of donated materials. Among the roles and responsibilities described in the development agreement, it described the Club's responsibilities for project funding.

**BACKGROUND:** Chester Bowl, located at 1801 East Skyline Parkway, within Chester Park includes an alpine ski hill, other recreational facilities, and the Thoms Storm Chalet and Outdoor Recreation Center (Center). The Chester Bowl Improvement Club (Club) operates at Chester Bowl under a management agreement with the

City of Duluth, delivering outdoor recreation and educational programs for children, families, and underserved community members.

This resolution authorizes the proper city officials to execute a memorandum of agreement with the Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) regarding the Chester Bowl Thom Storm Chalet demolition and replacement in association with Section 106 environmental review requirements of the National Historic Preservation Act.

The City of Duluth and Chester Bowl Improvement Club are collaboratively pursuing replacement of the Thom Storm Chalet located in Chester Park to expand environmental education and recreation opportunities. A portion of the funding for this project is supported by a Community Development Block Grant with funding through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. As such, the project constitutes a federal undertaking and requires consultation with SHPO to identify and mitigate potential adverse effect to cultural and historic resources through Section 106 review.

During review of the project, it was determined that Chester Park is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Demolition and replacement of the Chalet constitutes an adverse effect to Chester Park. This memorandum of agreement describes the mitigation measure necessary to address the adverse effect and move forward with the project.

**BUDGET/FISCAL IMPACT:** The memorandum of agreement does not directly include financial implications for the City of Duluth. The mitigation measure requiring development of an interpretive display will be coordinated, funded, and completed by the Chester Bowl Improvement Club. City of Duluth staff will support the Chester Bowl Improvement Club through the development of the interpretive display by providing technical review.

**OPTIONS:** Authorize the memorandum of agreement to allow the project to proceed or decline authorization to halt the demolition and replacement of the Chalet.

**NECESSARY ACTION:** Authorize the memorandum of agreement.

**ATTACHMENTS:** Exhibit A – Memorandum of Agreement