

THORNHURST TOWNSHIP
ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENT NO. 2026-47

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND THORNHURST'S ZONING ORDINANCE TO ALLOW SHORT-TERM
RENTALS IN R-1 AND R-C Zoning Districts

Part 1
Definitions

27-201. Applicable Definitions

Add the following definition:

Short-Term Rental: Any dwelling unit within a residential structure rented for overnight lodging for a period of not less than one (1) day and not more than twenty-nine (29) days.

Part 4

Add the following to Use Class, Permitted Uses (a), to the R-1 and R-C Zoning Districts

Schedule 27-1						
Regulations Governing the Use of Land						
Use Class	Zoning Districts					
Permitted Uses (a)	OSC	A-R	V-R	R-1	R-2	R-C
Open space uses	X	X				
Agriculture and forestry [Ord. 41]	X	X	X(d)	X(d)	X(d)	X(d)
Single-family residential	X	X	X	X	X	X
Two-Family residential				X		X
Multi-family residential [Ord 37]					X	X
Family care residential		X		X		X
Limited commercial						X
Customary accessory uses	X	X	X	X	X	X
Short-Term Rentals				X		X
Special Exceptions (b)						
Animal Husbandry	X	X				
Group care and related residential uses		X		X		X
Mobile home parks		X				
Appropriate public uses and essential services	X	X	X	X	X	X
Conditional uses (c)						
Special commercial and industrial						X
Natural resource and extractive uses		X				
Wind Farms [Ord 37]	X					

1.1 Zoning Rest

a. Permitted Zoning Districts: Short-term rentals shall be permitted as a principal use only in the R-1 and R-C Zoning Districts, subject to compliance with all requirements of this Ordinance, including licensing, inspections, parking, and occupancy limits as set forth in the "The Short-Term Rental Ordinance of Thornhurst Township."

b. Prohibited Zoning Districts: Short-term rentals are expressly prohibited in all other zoning districts, including but not limited to the Conservation (OSC- Open Space Conservation) District, Agricultural-Residential (A-R) District, Village Residential (V-R) District, and the Medium Density Residential (R-2) District, except as provided in Section 1.3 (Grandfathering).

1.2 Legally Existing Short-Term Rentals

a. Any short-term rental operating lawfully in a zoning district other than R-1 or R-C as of the effective date of this Ordinance and which holds a valid short-term rental license issued by the Township prior to the effective date, shall be permitted to continue operating as a nonconforming use, provided the following conditions are met:

- i.** The short-term rental maintains continuous compliance with all requirements of "The Short-Term Rental Ordinance of Thornhurst Township," including annual license renewal and inspections.
- ii.** The short-term rental does not cease operation for a period of twelve (12) consecutive months. Cessation of operation for twelve (12) months or more shall result in the loss of nonconforming use status.
- iii.** The property owner provides documentation to the Township Zoning Officer within ninety (90) days of the effective date of this Ordinance, verifying that the short-term rental was in operation and licensed prior to the effective date.

b. Nonconforming short-term rentals may not be expanded or modified in a manner that increases the intensity of the use (e.g., increasing the number of bedrooms, bathrooms or occupancy) without obtaining a variance from the Township Zoning Hearing Board.

1.3 Enforcement

a. Any property found to be operating a short-term rental in a zoning district other than R-1 or R-C, that is not a legal non-conforming use, shall be considered in violation of this Ordinance and subject to enforcement actions as provided in the Township Zoning Ordinance, this Ordinance and the Pennsylvania MPC.

b. Violations may result in fines, revocation of the short-term rental license, injunctive relief or monetary remedies as determined by the Township. If the Township seeks and receives injunctive relief or any other Court-Ordered relief regarding a violation of this Ordinance or "The Short-Term Rental Ordinance of Thornhurst Township," the Township shall be entitled to all professional fees and expenses incurred in connection with such relief, along with any and all fees, costs and expenses related to the enforcement of said Ordinances. Likewise the Township shall be entitled to reimbursement of administrative fees and expenses incurred with the enforcement of this Ordinance.

The Public Hearing for the Ordinance was held on May 14th 2026.

This Ordinance, amending the Thornhurst Township Zoning Ordinance, enacted July 19, 1995, is hereby Ordinance and Enacted by the Board of Supervisors of Thornhurst Township, Lackawanna County, Pennsylvania, at a duly convened meeting of the Board of Supervisors of Thornhurst Township this 14th day of May 2026, to become effective immediately.

TOWNSHIP OF THORNHURST

By:

Elaine Evans

Elaine Evans, Chair

Scott Jordan

Scott Jordan, Supervisor

James Learn

James Learn, Supervisor

ATTEST:

Jennifer Mateyka

Jennifer Mateyka

Secretary