

Ride On Route 75 will keep rolling

■ County Council restores funding for only route connecting Clarksburg to Germantown Transit Center

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The County Council voted Tuesday not to eliminate the only Ride On bus route between the Germantown Transit Center and Urbana.

Clarksburg residents were worried about the county executive's proposal to cancel Ride On Route 75, which makes stops in Clarksburg.

Route 75 makes stops at the Montgomery County Correctional Facility in Boyds and Comsat and along Route 355 in Clarksburg and Hyattstown. The route ends in Urbana.

Councilwoman Nancy Floreen (D-At large) of Garrett Park said keeping the bus route is the right thing to do.

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BUSES

"It seemed like a modest return to serve a needy part of the county needing transit service," she said.

When the county was making plans to move the jail population from Rockville to Boyds in 2001, Clarksburg residents advocated

for bringing bus service to the county jail.

Donna Pfeiffer, co-coordinator of the Clarksburg school cluster, sent e-mails to the county's Department of Public Works and Transportation and to the County Council to advocate for keeping Route 75 because some Clarksburg High School students rely on the bus as well.

"That is a big concern for everybody in Clarksburg," she said.

"Some of the kids do internships and work during half of the day."

The Clarksburg community was pleasantly surprised to hear the bus will stay for another year.

"We are very pleased they have responded to the concern in the upcounty," said Kathie Hulley, president of the Clarksburg Civic Association.

Patrick K. Lacefield, spokesman for County Executive

Isiah Leggett, said the proposal was part of a plan to address the \$400 million shortfall in next year's budget.

The annual savings from eliminating the route would have been \$593,082, said Esther Bowring, a county spokeswoman.

In November, Leggett asked all county agencies to come up with a plan to try to deal with the shortfall.

Lacefield said the proposal to eliminate Route 75 was an attempt to try to save money with the least possible impact.

Route 75 only averages nine riders per hour on weekdays and Ride On expects a minimum of 15 riders per hour for buses on weekdays, Bowring said. The average ridership of Ride On buses throughout the county is 28 riders per hour on weekdays, she said.