

Public Comments

Montana Districting and Apportionment Commission
Comments received between October 18 and October 24, 2022

Distributed electronically October 25, 2022

Sherley, Laura

From: MDAC <contact@mtredistricting.gov>
Sent: Friday, October 21, 2022 7:43 PM
To: Districting
Subject: MDAC Comment from: John Esp

From: John Esp johnesp2001@yahoo.com
Residence: Big Timber

Message:

Dear Commissioners,

Ever since new legislative boundaries were drawn following the 1972 Constitution in response to rulings by the U. S Supreme Court, Park and Sweet Grass counties have shared two House Districts, and a single Senate District. After the initial Redistricting Commission put our two counties together, similar districts have been drawn with very few changes by subsequent Commissions, because, I believe, they felt those districts met all the Constitutional Criteria, they were within the population deviation allowed, they were compact, contiguous, and kept communities of interest intact. (ie. the Yellowstone River corridor communities)

Now you have before you four proposals from this Commission, to tear asunder five decades of Legislative District history, and community history, and long held community associations, wholly in the name of one small groups' vision of "fairness".

Please don't go down that path. You can very easily put our two counties together in their entirety, with a small additional population from some adjoining area and meet all the Constitutional Criteria.

Ever since the Crow reservation boundary was moved east to the Rosebud in the 1880's, this Yellowstone trade corridor has tied us together in culture and politics. Please have as your paramount goal to keep our cultural and political ties as they are today and have been for more than a century. Let the reality you find on the ground in our communities be your guiding light in this area of Montana.

John Esp

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This e-mail was sent from a contact form on MDAC (<https://mtredistricting.gov>)

Sherley, Laura

From: MDAC <contact@mtredistricting.gov>
Sent: Sunday, October 23, 2022 3:59 PM
To: Districting
Subject: MDAC Comment from: Birgit Graf

From: Birgit Graf birgitegraf@gmail.com
Residence: Missoula, MT

Message:

After carefully studying the State Legislative redistricting map proposals, the competitiveness metric, mandatory criteria and stated goals of the Commission, I am in favor of proposals 2 and 3, and strongly oppose proposals 1 and 4. Adopting maps 1 or 4 would not even remotely reflect the ratio of statewide votes (57% to 43%), but would disproportionately favor one party over another (~70% to ~30%). Both maps 2 and 3 reflect the factual ratio more adequately. Also, proposals 1 and 4 are not congruent with the Federal Voting Rights Act, but disenfranchise Minority (Native American) voters in Montana. The Reservation populations, who share common interests, needs and perspectives, and have extended historical ties and relationships, require 6 Majority/Minority House districts which can pair up to build 3 Senate districts. In map 1, the Fort Belknap Reservation and the Fort Peck Reservation cannot form a Senate District, since districts 7 and 9 are geographically disconnected. The same holds true for proposed House districts 6 and 18 (map 4), making it impossible for the CSKT and Blackfeet Reservations to form a single Senate district. Taking the competitive metric into account, various proposed Native American districts in both map 1 (districts 1 and 2) and map 4 (districts 39 and 40) do not contain sufficient NA majorities of voting age to have a fair chance to elect a House or Senate representative of their choice. By adopting proposal 2 or 3, NA voters would get an equal opportunity to be represented by a candidate of their choice. I appreciate your efforts and considerations based on fairness and justice. Thank you!

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This e-mail was sent from a contact form on MDAC (<https://mtredistricting.gov>)

Sherley, Laura

From: Daniel Horman <danielhormanrealestate@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, October 24, 2022 6:40 AM
To: districting@mt.gov
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Montana Redistricting

Dear Montana Redistricting Committee Member,

Please choose map #1. It provides compactness of districts and keeps communities together.

Reject Maps #2 and #3. It is obviously ridiculous to include Red Lodge, Gardiner and Big Sky in the same district. This is Definitely NOT a compact district. It also does NOT keep communities intact, putting our County Seat in a different district than the rest of Carbon County. Also, the long and narrow district running east to west in the Fort Peck area is an obvious gerrymander, not having any semblance of compactness.

Map #4 is my second choice; it also provides compactness and keeps communities together.

Thankyou



**REGINA PLETTENBERG
ELECTION ADMINISTRATOR
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(406) 375-6550
recorder@rc.mt.gov**

October 18, 2022

Dear Commission Members:

First, I want to thank you all for the hours of hard work you have given the state working on these legislative and the congressional maps. I know it is a very difficult and overwhelming task. I wanted to send some comments on the current proposed maps as they relate to Ravalli County.

This will be my third redistricting since I have worked in the Election Office. In forming our precincts and choosing our polling places we have always used the school districts, which are definitely our main communities of interest. For this reason, I have had my GIS office overlay our school district boundaries on the four maps, which I have sent with these comments. I also put big black dots on the areas that we made some changes. Most of these changes involved little to no population but were just made to “clean up” the lines to match the school district boundaries. In other places you will see that I did make some population adjustments so that I could create a precinct within the school district boundary or at least have a decent split. These considerations are important so that we don’t leave a very small number of voters in an area and risk voter secrecy.

Another area of community in our county are our towns. Although Ravalli is the seventh largest county in the state and often referred to as urban, if you look at our population you will see that very little is within our municipalities. We are really are a rural county and our incorporated areas are small and I think should remain within one house district if possible. That said, I know you have to make decisions, not just for Ravalli County, but the whole state and keeping our towns whole may not be possible but I hope you will consider it.

One last concern is sharing a district with Granite County. Geographically, the only direct way to get to Granite County from Ravalli County is over Skalkaho Pass. In my opinion, this pass is not great to go over in the summer when it is beautiful but the pass is completely closed about half the year. That means candidates would have to travel North through our County and through Missoula County to get to Granite. Not impossible, but another consideration.

Map 1 – This map is the closest to our current boundaries and would be the easiest for our voters, as there would be very little change. The changes I made to this map are very, very minor.

Map 2 - I made a few cleanup changes to this map and a few changes to make the boundaries match the school lines. This was done in the Northwest corner of Lone Rock School and just South to the Stevensville School (between the green and grey area). Below (in the blue) you will see a few changes were done to include areas in the Corvallis School District.

Map 3 - This map is also very close to our current boundaries and would be very easy for our voters. I made the same changes on this map to the Lone Rock and Stevensville School Districts as I did on Map 2 and then just a few cleanup changes below on the Corvallis School line.

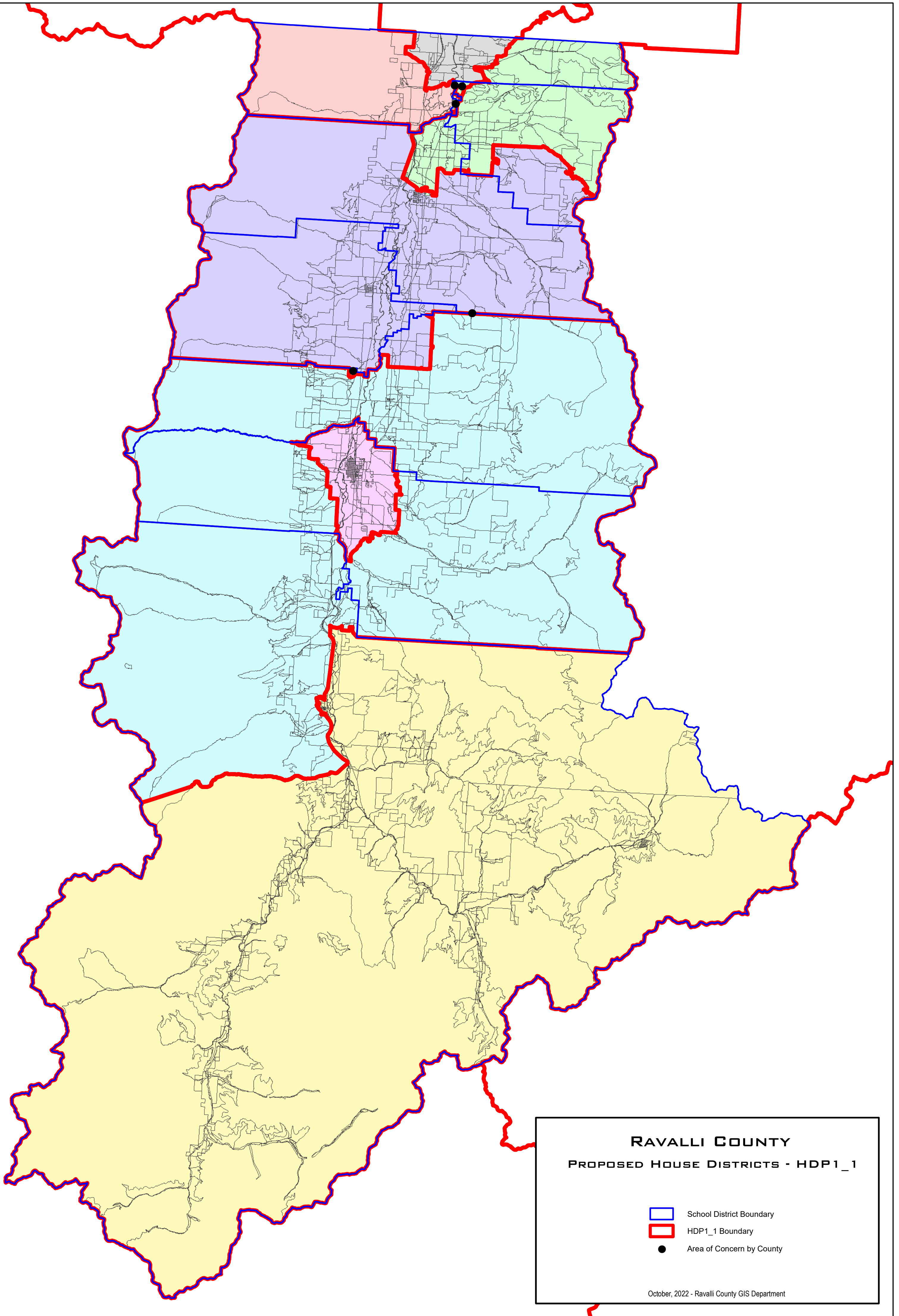
Map 4 - This map I made the most significant changes, mostly between Hamilton and Corvallis. On the West side of Corvallis (in purple) I added significant area but there are very few voters there, I did the same on the Southeast portion. Again, large area but only about 46 population. I also made changes to the area on the South end of City of Hamilton (between the blue and purple). These changes were made to balance the population while trying to match the lines to the school districts.

Again, I want to thank the Commission for its time and consideration. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.




Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Regina Plettenberg". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "R".

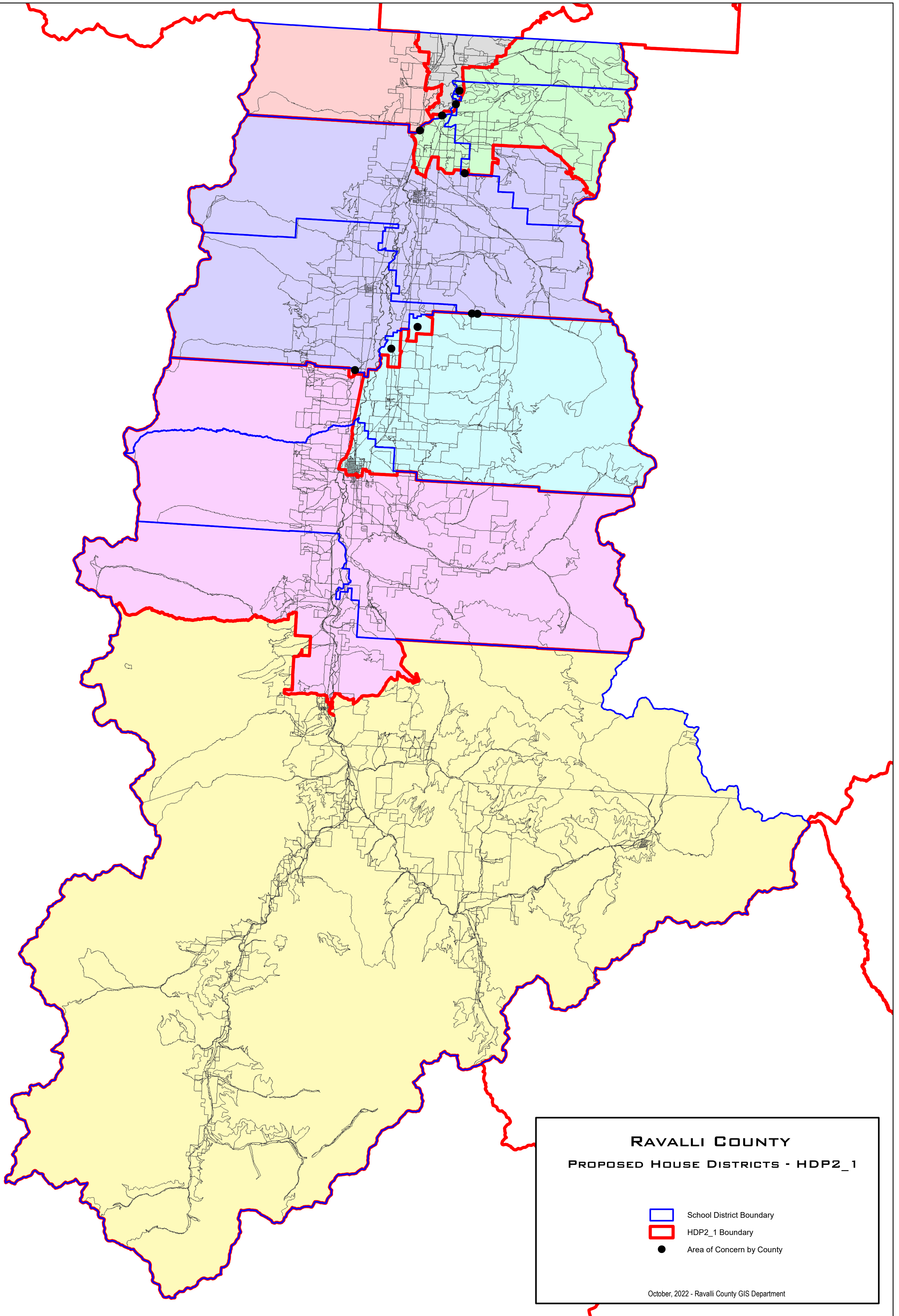
REGINA PLETTENBERG,
Election Administrator






RAVALLI COUNTY
PROPOSED HOUSE DISTRICTS - HDP1_1

-  School District Boundary
-  HDP1_1 Boundary
-  Area of Concern by County

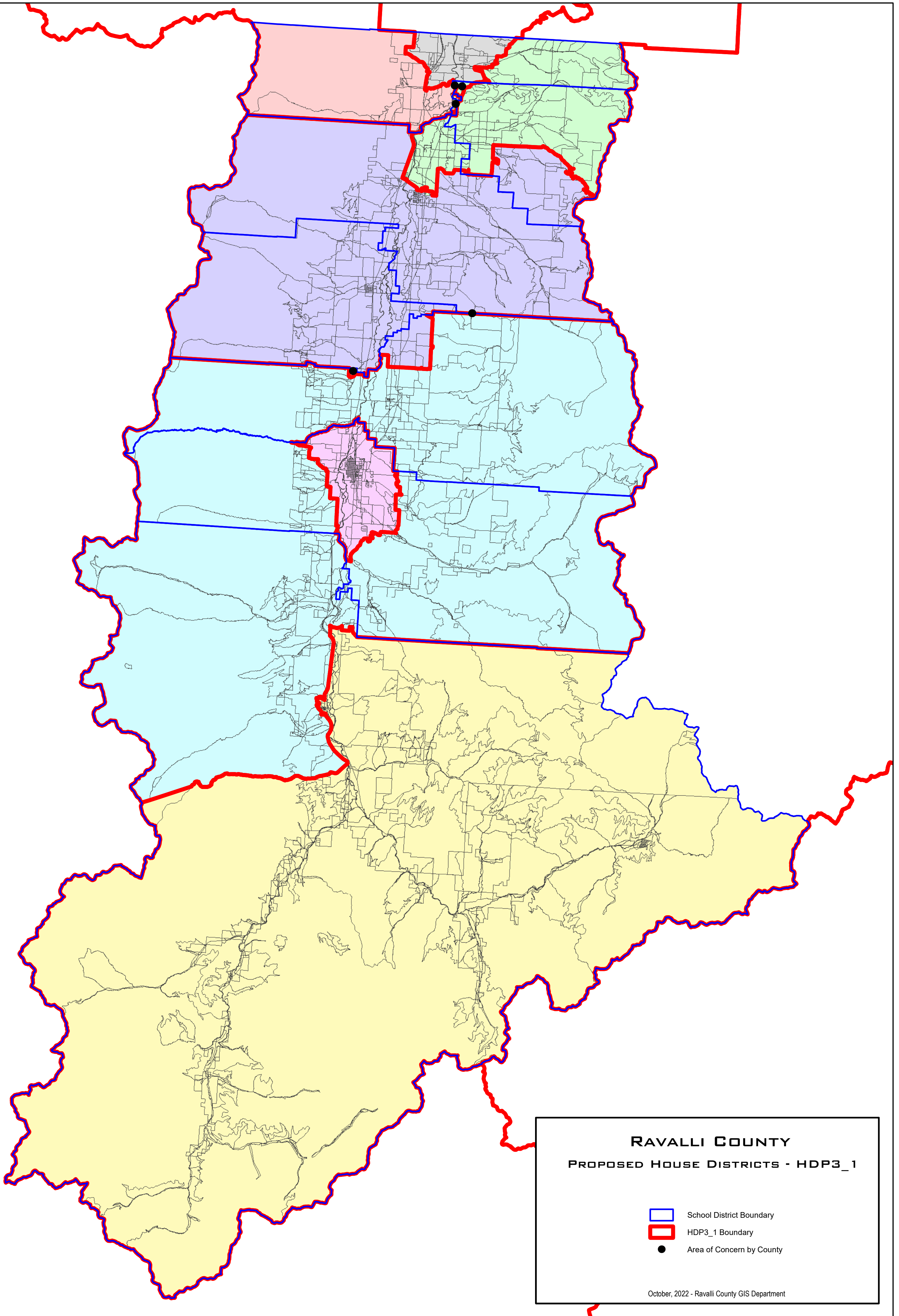
October, 2022 - Ravalli County GIS Department






RAVALLI COUNTY
PROPOSED HOUSE DISTRICTS - HDP2_1

-  School District Boundary
-  HDP2_1 Boundary
-  Area of Concern by County

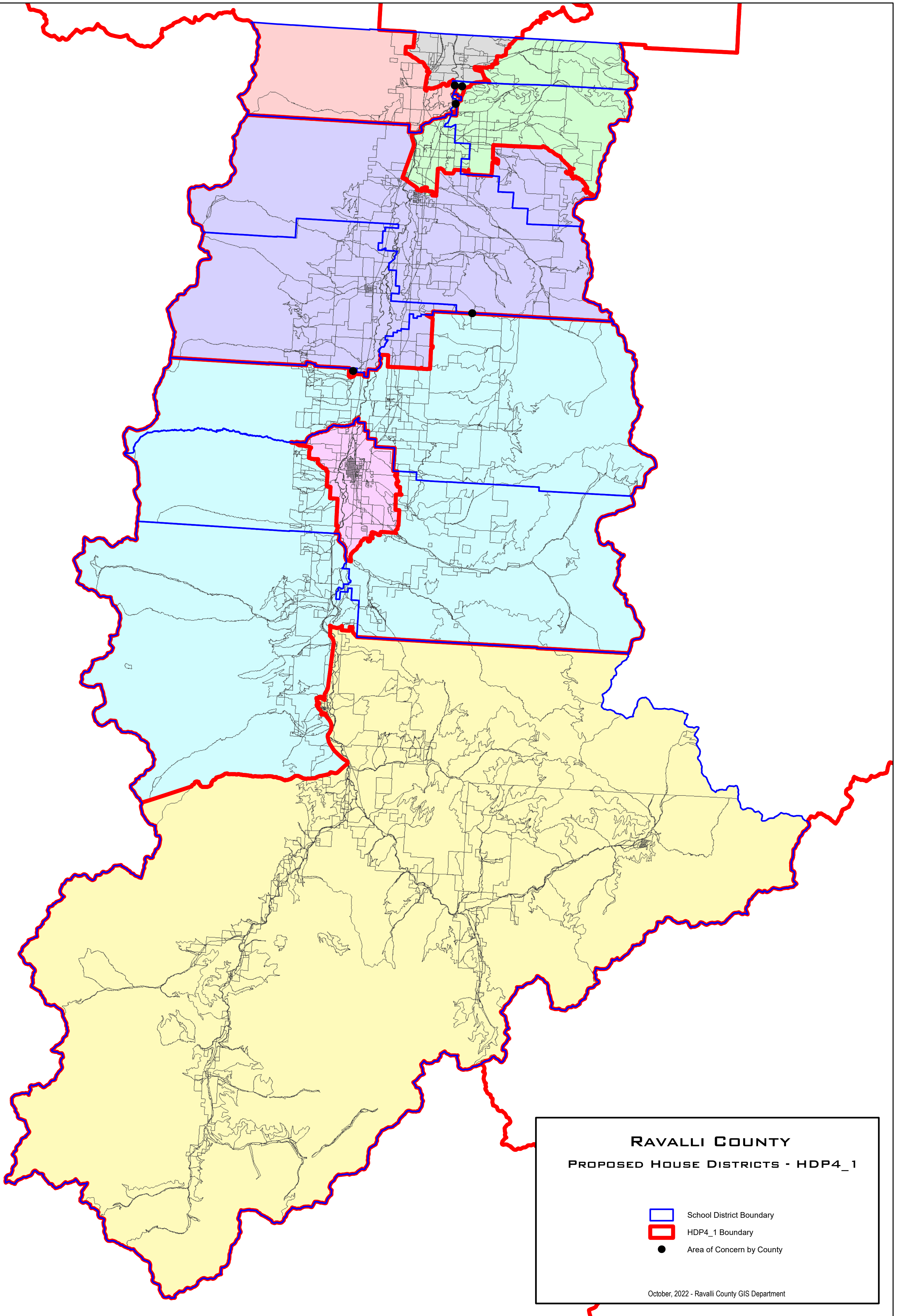
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RAVALLI COUNTY
PROPOSED HOUSE DISTRICTS - HDP3_1

-  School District Boundary
-  HDP3_1 Boundary
-  Area of Concern by County

October, 2022 - Ravalli County GIS Department



RAVALLI COUNTY
PROPOSED HOUSE DISTRICTS - HDP4_1

-  School District Boundary
-  HDP4_1 Boundary
-  Area of Concern by County

October, 2022 - Ravalli County GIS Department