



TOWN OF FAIRFAX

STAFF REPORT

April 15, 2021

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Ben Berto, Director of Planning and Building Services

SUBJECT: Ridgeline Scenic Corridor Area/Boundary Clarification

BACKGROUND

Staff continues to work on a final digitized, georeferenced baseline map of the Town's Ridgeline Scenic Corridor (RSC) as defined in Zoning Chapter 17.060 Ridgeline Development. The Town's RSC regulations cannot be fully implemented without diagrammatic documentation of the RSC's locations and boundaries. Commissioner Newton assisted in development of the visual map product first considered by your Commission at the March 18 meeting.

This is the eleventh Planning Commission meeting on the Ridgeline Scenic Corridor.

DISCUSSION

As previously noted in previous staff reports it will assist applicants, reviewing bodies, and staff to have a legally and procedurally grounded reference map that can be applied in comparing property boundaries to RSC determinations. Prior to the current effort, no comprehensive or fully useable map has ever been attempted by the Town.

Commissioner Newton assisted staff greatly in developing a clear visual diagram explaining why the 100-foot vertical ridgeline scenic corridor as currently defined cannot be literally applied or mapped. Attachments A and B shows via a color-gradated "ombre" that the 100-vertical foot RSC covers the entire Town. The extent of each vertical layer is clearly shown. For example, Attachment A shows a color-gradated 100-foot vertical interval between the 300-foot and 200-foot elevation of Fairfax Ridge that extends across 10 miles of hillside in Town. The ombre shows that overall every hillside and even the flatland peneplane of Fairfax would be included in the 100-vertical foot RSC as written and applied to the designated ridgelines. This in turn would require all discretionary review applicants to attempt to comply with Chapter 17.060, for example, having to provide photographs and or illustrations on how the project is seen from public gathering places and major roadways (per Section 17.060.040 (2)).

To avoid this burdensome and unnecessary requirement on all applications, the solution Commissioner Newton and staff came up with was to apply the vertical RSC to the 35 feet immediately downhill from any point on a designated ridgeline. One reason for selecting at 35-

foot drop is the zoning ordinance lists 35 feet as the maximum building height for hillside development. Another is the 35-foot drop also doesn't result in a distorted vertical RSC that covers the entirety of Fairfax unlike a 100-foot vertical RSC. Instead, a 35-foot vertical RSC zone focusses on areas where a house might otherwise broach the ridgeline to apply RSC regulations. Staff believes that this is a reasonable approach that incorporates a vertical RSC dimension without being unusable like the 100-foot vertical RSC.

The mapped 35-foot RSC is mapped for all designated ridgelines in Attachment B. The map shows that the 35-foot vertical RSC is fairly consistent with the boundaries of the digitized, georeferenced version of the 1974 Visual Resources Map and the 150-horizontal foot RSC map. This combined map shows the cumulative extent of all three RSC types.

RECOMMENDATION

Direct staff to apply the combined, cumulative RSC map to applications in the hillside areas of the Town. Staff will then develop a full-size version of the map, and apply to MarinMap to include the cumulative RSC as a layer in its digitized GIS map products for Fairfax. Staff will also develop a list of properties that would be located in the RSC zone for quick reference.

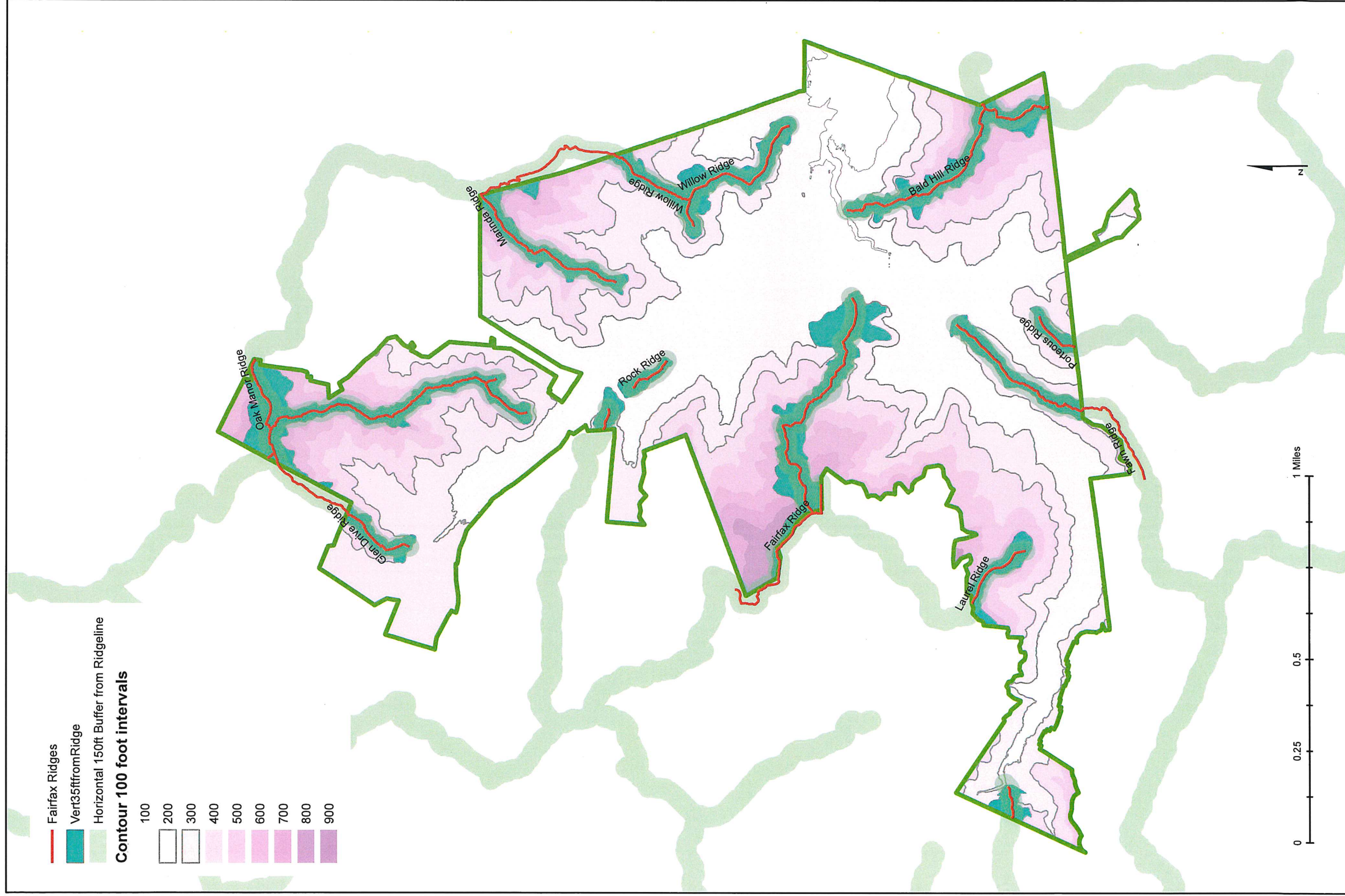
ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment A Map: Fairfax 100-Foot Contours
- Attachment B Map: Cumulative Fairfax boundary map with 35-Foot Vertical Distance, georeferenced digitized 1974 Visual Resources Map No. 9, and 150 Foot Horizontal Distance cumulatively combined
- Attachment C Map: Cumulative Fairfax RSC map with entire 1974 Visual Resources Map No. 9 extent

Fairfax - 100 Foot Contours

200 -300 Foot Contours Highlighted
Draft of 35 Foot Vertical Drop from Ridges

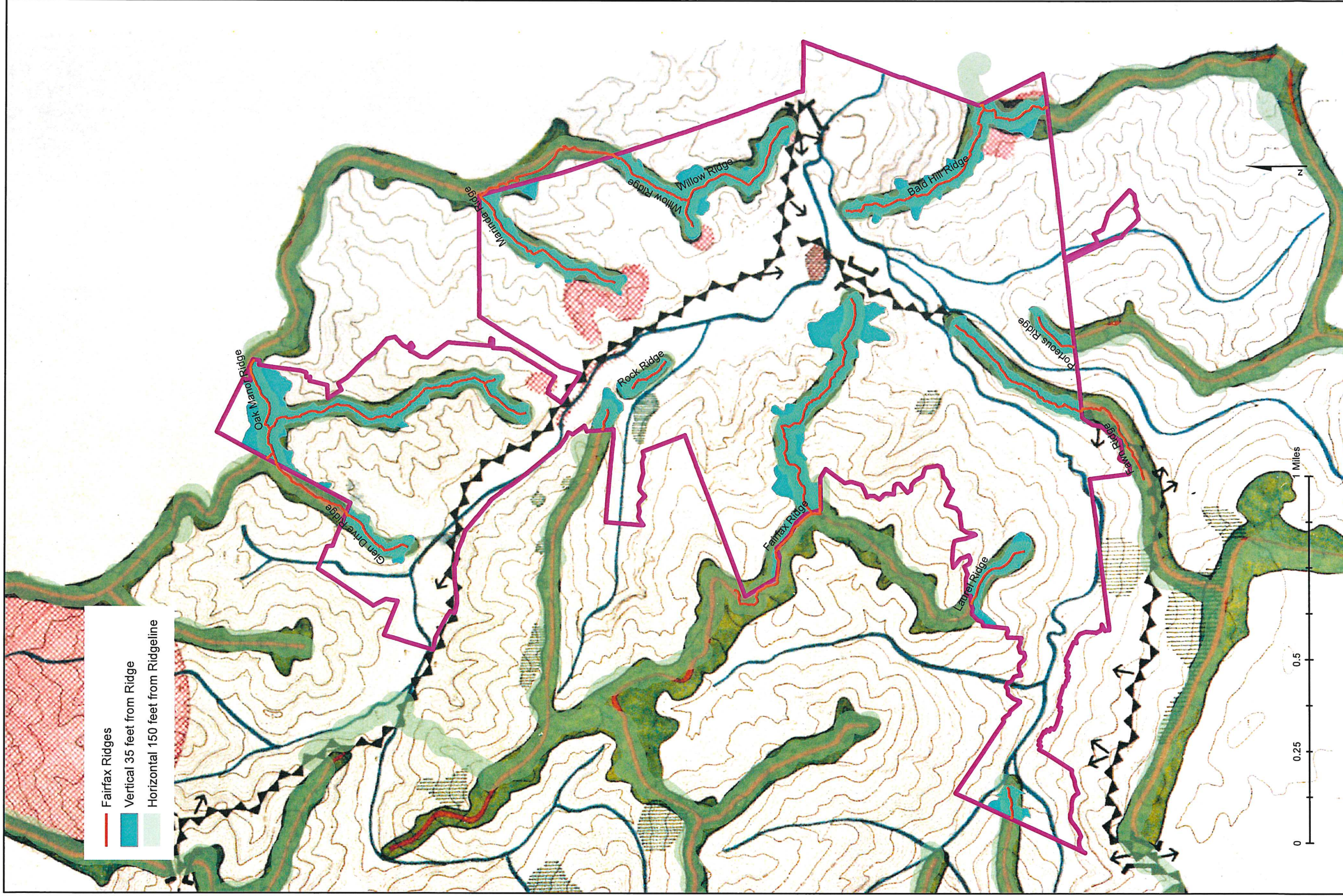
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Ridgeline Scenic Corridor - Combined

Fairfax Area of 1974 Map of Visual Resources with
150 foot horizontal and 35 foot vertical areas

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Ridgeline Scenic Corridor - Combined

1974 Map of Visual Resources with
150 foot horizontal and 35 foot vertical areas

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