The tour, which was led by Robert Brauman, the Bluebelt division’s construction project manager, highlighted the current work taking place on opposite sides of Freeborn Street in Midland Beach. Large swaths of phragmites, common reed grass which is prone to brush fires, have already been cleared to make way for a new 4.7 acre freshwater wetland between Nugent Avenue and Freeborn, and another .7 acre freshwater wetland between Freeborn and Olympia Boulevard.

These wetlands will slow the stormwater down after it empties from the sewer system and surrounding watershed and detain it, allowing it to be naturally filtered. The water will then slowly flow over weirs and into the new west branch of New Creek. The stream will be built to a width of 32 feet and will run southeast through City-owned property that, in later phases of the project, will be developed into freshwater wetlands. For now, a makeshift stream runs through the site to prevent the ground from getting soggy, making it difficult for the excavators and front-end loaders to maneuver.

The contractor is in the process of building a culvert beneath Freeborn that will allow the new stream to pass under the existing roadway, naturally moving the water from upstream to downstream. The new water management system also calls for culverts to be built under Olympia Boulevard and Graham Boulevard, before meeting the main channel of New Creek near Slater Boulevard. Eventually, the system will empty into lower New York Harbor.

Once the Bluebelts are fully constructed, more diverse wetland plantings, including herbaceous plants, wildflowers, woody shrubs and trees, will be added to the landscape in an effort to attract wildlife. Future phases of the project will include the installation of catch basins and storm sewers under neighborhood streets to collect and convey the stormwater to the Bluebelts.

It is expected that the New Creek Bluebelt will improve the low-lying area’s drainage system, help reduce street flooding and provide some much-needed relief to Midland Beach residents. The project is being funded jointly by DEP and an $11 million U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) grant secured by Senator Charles Schumer. DDC will manage the construction of the Bluebelts, which is expected to be completed by the end of this year.

I’d like to thank Deputy Borough President Burke for his longtime support of the Bluebelts. We at BWSO look forward to continuing to work together with Staten Island Borough Hall on this and other infrastructure projects that will improve the quality of life for Staten Islanders. Additionally, I want to thank Rob, and BWSO staff Nick Barbaro, Charlie Olson, Thomas Wynne, Jason Nahvi, Janinne McColgan, Jim Rossi, Dean Cavallaro, and Frank Fontana for participating in the tour, as well as Mario Bruno and Ibrahim Abdul-Matin from BPAC, and Michael Kim from the Commissioner’s Office.
If you file an air / noise complaint with 311, Daniel Corchado just might be the inspector that shows up to investigate. He is part of the professionally trained staff that help DEP’s Bureau of Environmental Compliance (BEC) enforce the City’s air and noise codes. As an Air and Noise Pollution Inspector, he must be knowledgeable about air/ noise regulations, as well as the certificates that are required to operate boilers, dry cleaning machines and other heavy machinery that can affect air quality.

Since noise continues to be the number one quality of life issue in New York City, Corchado and his colleagues rarely experience a dull moment. In fact, BEC responded to 42,029 noise complaints in 2016 alone. For Corchado, it’s all in a day’s work. “Every case is different,” says Corchado. “I can go from measuring noise in an 8th floor walkup, to inspecting a boiler in the basement of a skyscraper, to monitoring dust on a construction site. I’m always learning something new.”

As a kid growing up in the Bronx, Corchado would regularly work with his father on cars in the neighborhood. It was during this time that he learned how important it was to use his ears and nose to help pinpoint and resolve mechanical issues. Corchado went on to fine-tune his inspection skills professionally, spending 10 years as a master certified technician at a major compliance firm. He also went on to fine-tune his inspection skills professionally, spending 10 years as a master certified technician at a major compliance firm.

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Construction is underway on a $20 million sewer project along 119th Avenue in southeast Queens neighborhood of St. Albans that will improve drainage and reduce flooding. Most of the roadways in this area lack adequate stormwater infrastructure, including catch basins and sewers, and during heavy rain there can be chronic flooding. Funding for the project is being provided by DEP while DDC will oversee the construction. As part of the project, stormwater and sanitary sewers will be installed along 119th Avenue between 196th Street and 192nd Street, and along Lucas Street from 120th Road to Springfield Boulevard. While the roadway is opened to install the sewers, new water mains will also be constructed to improve water distribution in the area. This project is part of Mayor de Blasio’s commitment of $1.7 billion to address flooding in southeast Queens.

We welcome your feedback! To submit an announcement or suggestion, please email us at: newsletter@dep.nyc.gov.