Question [2]

What does the image's date and title suggest to you? The date is 2009, so it was taken relatively recently; the location could look remarkably differently now: or it could look nearly exactly the same. Whether the location is different or the same depends largely on the wishes of its residents and the political will of its governmental leaders. Also, the title—*Packard Dump Truck*—suggests the focus of the image rests on the dilapidated truck, perhaps a symbol for the city's dilapidated truck and automobile industry.

Who is the image's creator(s)… why might the creator(s) have made and shared this image? Creative Commons is a global nonprofit organization that works to share creativity and knowledge. This suggests a professional, or professional-type, use of the photograph to specifically focus attention on the destroyed vehicle next to the destroyed factory as a way to stress on "distance" from a sturdy and secure city miles away.

When students mention the skyline, you can share this is Detroit, MI and then **you can discuss its location and how it's connected to other places.** Detroit is a port city situated on a strait that connects the Great Lakes to the Saint Lawrence Seaway which, in turn, leads to the Atlantic Ocean. Thus, Detroit is a key port for water transportation and shipping. Also, the city was founded on an extensive flat plain with few rolling hills, easily allowing highways and railways to link other population centers. Thus, Detroit is also a vital transportation hub for land travel and commerce. While it looks far away, the city is only four miles from the photographer. There are, however, at least fifty "suburbs" (Latin: under/outside, city) within about an hour's radius from Detroit. The city's suburbs exist partly because little housing development occurred in the 1930s (Great Depression) and early-1940s (WWII). When Detroit's middle class in the late-1940s wanted houses with spacious yards, developers bought land outside the city and built homes to sell for profit. Workers' travel into the city—commuting—was made easier and more affordable by advancements in transit systems (e.g., trolly, light rail, tram, bus, subway). Highways were also built to connect the suburbs to the city [4].

You can also discuss how **political and social decisions have influenced the spatial patterns of Detroit.** In the early 20th Century, many African Americans moved from Southern states—the Great Migration—to Northeastern and Midwestern states, including Michigan (400,000 people migrated to Detroit between 1941 and 1943). Detroit became "one of the most racially and ethnically diverse places in America" [18]. While Detroit held employment and educational opportunities for African Americans, many of the city's white citizens refused to accept racial and ethnic diversity. White racism included discriminatory housing practices, unfair laws and policing policies, and segregated schooling. In 1943, management at the Packard factory promoted 3 African Americans to work on the all-white assembly line; 25,000 white workers walked out in protest. Three weeks later, racial tensions erupted into a riot [19] that required federal troops to stop (another riot occurred in 1967). When a 1974 Supreme Court case (Milliken v. Bradley) ruled that schools in Detroit's suburbs were not obligated to desegregate unless they drew boundary lines with clear racist intent, many whites moved from the city to its suburbs [20]. In 1950, whites comprised 89% of Detroit's population; in 2016, they were about 10% [21].

Observe

Creative Commons. (2009). *Packard Dump Truck*. [1]

When students mention the broken windows you can discuss some **consequences of population decline**. When this factory closed (1958) many of its employees left the area, greatly decreasing the city's population = at that time it was 2 million; 60 years later it was 700,000 [10]. When a city's population declines, especially by 60% like Detroit's has, one major consequence is lower tax revenue collected. Federal, State, and Local taxes (mostly from property, income, and sales) fund public services; less funding means significant reductions to schools, police and firefighters, public hospitals, parks, libraries, etc. A city's existing infrastructure—roads, bridges, water maintenance—cannot be repaired regularly and new infrastructure is not built. In 2012, Detroit had about 70,000 abandoned buildings; 30,000 empty houses; and 90,000 vacant lots [11]. Detroit's unemployment was 20% in 2015; and in 2016, 36% of Detroit's residents lived in poverty [12]. Also, rapid population decrease and severe economic downturns may lead to increased risk for psychological depression and health problems for city residents [13]. Also, diminished public services (e.g., protection, transportation) can cause a rise in anti-government sentiment and mistrust.

You can also share that Detroit is the largest city on the US-Canada boarder. You can also **discuss its location: what's here?** Detroit is often called "Motor City" because its economy throughout the past century had been defined by a single industry: automobiles. Henry Ford built the first auto factory there in 1903, soon there were over 100 auto companies competing for customers and many more auto-related businesses (e.g., glass, steel, cooper) [3].

When students mention the trees growing throughout the factory buildings you can **discuss how use of this space has changed over time**. Once the core of Detroit's manufacturing base, these buildings became a symbol of the city's decay [5]. After the factory closed in 1958, a few small businesses (i.e., storage) operated on the site, but since the 1990s the buildings have mostly been used for graffiti, paintball, urban exploration, and "underground" raves and techno parties [6]. However, at a government auction in 2013 a developer purchased the Packard plant and planned a 15-year, $300 million investment with commercial businesses, restaurants, residences, etc. [5].

When students mention it, you can discuss how the ruined dump truck may symbolize the city's declining auto industry. You can also **discuss how specific economic and political decisions have influenced the spatial patterns of Detroit.** This factory, finished in 1911 for the James Packard Motor Car Company, sold the top-selling luxury car in the 1920s and 1930s, outselling Cadillac and Lincoln. After WWII, Packard management responded poorly to evolving market competition from the USA (Ford, General Motors, Chrysler), Germany (Diamler, Benz), and Japan (Honda, Toyota) [7]. Instead of creating the smaller, more efficient cars customers wanted, Packard management lobbied the US government to limit automobile imports. Then they tried money-saving efforts: moving manufacturing compartments away to smaller cities with lower costs, reducing the workforce, and replacing thousands of workers with new technology/automation [8]. Packard merged with Studebaker in 1954 and by 1958 the plant closed, all workers unemployed [9].

Reflect

What problems are associated with rapid population decline?

>> You can guide the class in summarizing the social and economic problems commonly associated with population decline as mentioned during the discussion.

>> You can have students reflect on the following implications from the photographs: Why might it be difficult for people to thrive and reach their potential here? When a city like Detroit experiences this type of decline, what are the potential consequences for individual citizens? For society?

Citations: [#] throughout the printer… **1.** https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Packard_Dump_Truck.jpg; photo credit: Csmcm [CC BY-SA 3.0] (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0): Creative Commons is a global nonprofit organization that enables sharing and reuse of creativity and knowledge; **2.** The analysis format suggested here is informed by (a) the Library of Congress's "Teacher's Guides and Analysis Tools" webpage found: http://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/guides.html and (b) Gersmehl, P., & Gersmehl, C. (2007). Spatial thinking by young children: Neurologic evidence for early development and "educability". Journal of Geography, 106(5), 181-191, and (c) National Council for the Social Studies. (2013). The college, career, and civic life (C3) framework for the social studies state standards: Guidance for enhancing the rigor of K-12 civics, economics, geography, and history. Silver Springs, MD: NCSS; **3.** Sugrue, T. (2012). Motor City: The Story of Detroit; **4.** http://www.dailydetroit.com/2016/08/03/detroit-home-americas-first-urban-freeway/; **5.** Candice Williams. (3/1/2018). A year into revival efforts, Packard Plant cleans up. The Detroit News. From: https://www.detroitnews.com/story/news/local/detroit-city/2018/03/01/detroit-packard-plant-renovation/110956012/; **6.** Terry Smith. Making the Modern: Industry, art, and design in America. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press; **7.** New York Times. (2013). Anatomy of Detroit's Decline. https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/interactive/2013/08/17/us/detroit-decline.html; **8.** Ward, James A. (1995). The Fall of the Packard Motor Car Company. Stanford University Press; **9.** https://www.rbth.com/multimedia/history/2015/12/16/the-american-roots-of-classic-soviet-cars_551657; **10.** State & County QuickFacts. (2006). Detroit (city), Michigan. United States Census Bureau; **11.** https://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/11/magazine/how-detroit-became-the-world-capital-of-staring-at-abandoned-old-buildings.html?pagewanted=all; **12.** https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/michigan/articles/2017-09-14/census-figures-show-drop-in-de troit-poverty-rate; **13.** See Zivin, K., Paczkowski, M., & Galea, S. (2011). Economic downturns and population mental health: research findings, gaps, challenges and priorities. Psychological Medicine, 41(7).