Recent technological advances have a much vaunted effect on the way we navigate, communicate, and experience our cities. We already visually explore distant streetscapes and neighborhoods using Google Earth, 360° video, virtual reality, and even photographs on social media. But as a result of these advances, sense of place, legibility and knowledge of urban areas can be profoundly affected. In recent years, research on spatial and temporal displacement have given us a new understanding about how place identity and wayfinding differ when experienced in person versus remotely. Lynch (1960) noted in *The Image of the City* that we are not simply observers of the urban spectacle, but are ourselves a part of it; but how does that statement change if we are not physically present? Advances in GPS routing systems and mapping software have also become so commonplace as we navigate our urban landscape, that we have to
ask who is guiding the way we explore our cities. Additionally, with the advent of autonomous vehicles, will we essentially remove ourselves from choosing how we explore our urban context, and simply become passive observers? As architects, planners, and landscape architects, it is imperative that we understand how these changing technologies influence our perception of the city now and in the future.

This meta-inquiry explores some of these advances in technology, and how they might be affecting urban identity, legibility, wayfinding, and the way that we perceive and use our urban environments by reviewing existing design paradigms, multi-disciplinary research perspectives, as well as visual and social narratives presented in popular media. A critical understanding of how these technologies relate to urban perception can provide us with the theory and design tools that can help us shape smarter and more human-centered cities.

Keywords: Wayfinding, urban perception, emerging technologies, urban design

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