

High-speed train from Minneapolis to Chicago may be reality

By Kevin Hoffman in [Outstate](#)



"Doors closing in Minneapolis. Next stop: Chicago."

When "creative class" economics guru Richard Florida spoke to the Star Tribune, he had one suggestion for how to boost Minneapolis through the recession: a high-speed train to Chicago.

Now it sounds like it may become a reality, thanks to Obamanomics.

Florida [told](#) the Strib's editorial board:

Chicago is one of Florida's winners as a center for industrial management and a hub for some of the finance and legal business previously spread out over a number of smaller Midwestern cities. Florida doesn't mention Minnesota in the Atlantic piece, but in an interview he said we're relatively well positioned with a largely knowledge-based economy, a relatively resilient housing market, a strong creative class of talented professionals, a roster of global companies and a world-class University of Minnesota.

Florida advises state leaders to see the Twin Cities as the engine for the state's growth. He would push for more regional links to Chicago and Rochester. "If I were the czar of Minnesota, what I would want out of the stimulus is a fast train to Chicago," he said. He would position the U to take advantage of the economic downturn by poaching talent

from schools in the United States and abroad that might be weakened by financial challenges.

From Florida's lips to God's ears. Or Hennepin County, [according to this much-commented upon Strib story](#):

With \$8 billion in the federal stimulus package devoted to high-speed rail projects, supporters of the long-planned high-speed train from Chicago to St. Paul are scrambling to prepare a proposal strong enough to grab some of that money.

But a new player has entered the picture: Hennepin County, which wants the high-speed line extended to Minneapolis.

Hennepin County Commissioner Peter McLaughlin convinced his county board colleagues last week to pass by a 6-1 vote a resolution asking that "appropriate proposals" be developed to include Minneapolis in the high-speed route.

"The world changed when \$8 billion appeared," McLaughlin said.