MSU: $88.1M research site to boost Grand Rapids area

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GRAND RAPIDS — Michigan State University’s new $88.1 million biomedical research center in Grand Rapids will strengthen the area’s economic future, school officials said Thursday.

The comments came the same day as a groundbreaking for the East Lansing school’s Grand Rapids Research Center. The six-story, 162,800-square-foot facility will include workspaces and five core labs that will benefit researchers and MSU College of Human Medicine scientists.

“We envision the MSU research building and Grand Rapids Innovation Park to be a gateway to the Medical Mile and a magnet attracting business in life sciences and growth in the biotechnology sectors,” school President Lou Anna K. Simon said in a statement.

The building that the school approved earlier this year will be on the site of the former home of The Grand Rapids Press newspaper in downtown. It will occupy about half of the property, leaving the door open for future developments.

The research center is planned to open late 2017 and will support 260 members of MSU College of Human Medicine’s scientific research teams, including 94 principal investigators and their labs. At full capacity, the school said the center will support 44 research teams.

Some of the areas of study include Parkinson’s disease, Alzheimer’s disease, pediatric neurology, autism, inflammation, transplantation, cancer, genetics and women’s health and reproductive medicine.

The center is part of a long-term strategy that began in 2005 for the university to expand its presence in western Michigan. The College of Human Medicine opened the Secchia Center in 2010. The $90 million, privately funded facility was constructed specifically for medical education and isn’t designed to accommodate research labs.