The Institute for Transportation & Development Policy has identified the five most important elements for a cost-effective, high-performance bike-share system:

1. **STATION DENSITY**
   - A quality system needs 50–60 stations for every square kilometer, providing an average spacing of approximately 300 meters between stations and a convenient walking distance from each station to any point in between.

2. **BIKES PER RESIDENT**
   - There should be 10–30 bikes available for every 1,000 residents within the coverage area. Larger, denser cities and metropolitan regions that have a large influx of commuters into the area served by the system should have more bikes available to meet the needs of both commuters and residents during peak demand periods.

3. **COVERAGE AREA**
   - The minimum area covered by a system should be 10 square kilometers, large enough to contain a significant number of user origins and destinations. Smaller areas may drive down system usage.

4. **QUALITY BIKES**
   - Bikes should be durable, attractive and practical (with a front basket to carry bags, packages or groceries). The bicycles should also have specially designed parts and sizes, which discourages theft and resale.

5. **EASY-TO-USE STATIONS**
   - The process of checking out a bicycle should be simple. The payment and authorization technology should have an easy-to-use interface, a fully automated locking system, and real-time monitoring of occupancy rates (to track whether more or fewer bikes are needed for each station).